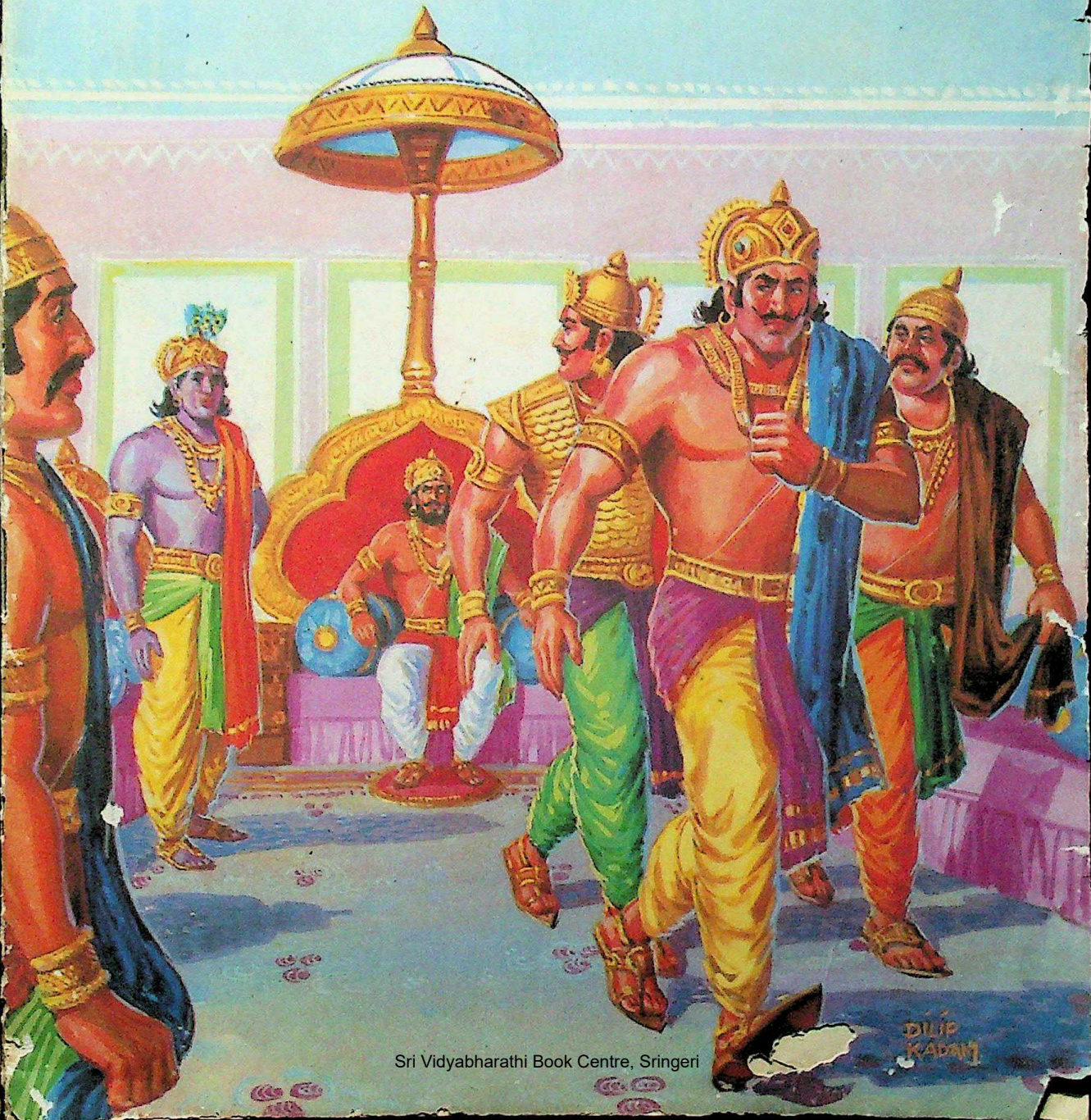




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KRISHNA'S PEACE MISSION



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MAHABHARATA

Veda Vyasa's Epic on the Bharata race was first recited in public by his disciple Vaishampayana at the behest of the ageless seer Vyasa himself.

The recital took place in the august presence of King Janamejaya—great grandson of Vyasa—and the many learned sages who had assembled for Janamejaya's Sarpa Satra (a 12-year-long snake sacrifice).

The twenty-eighth session of our rendering of the Mahabharata narrated how Sanjaya conveyed the message of the Pandavas, requesting the restoration of their kingdom, to the Kaurava assembly. A debate ensued among the Kauravas and Duryodana declared that he would not return the kingdom to the Pandavas at any cost. The session ended with Krishna taking up the task of negotiation for a peaceful settlement between the Kauravas and the Pandavas.

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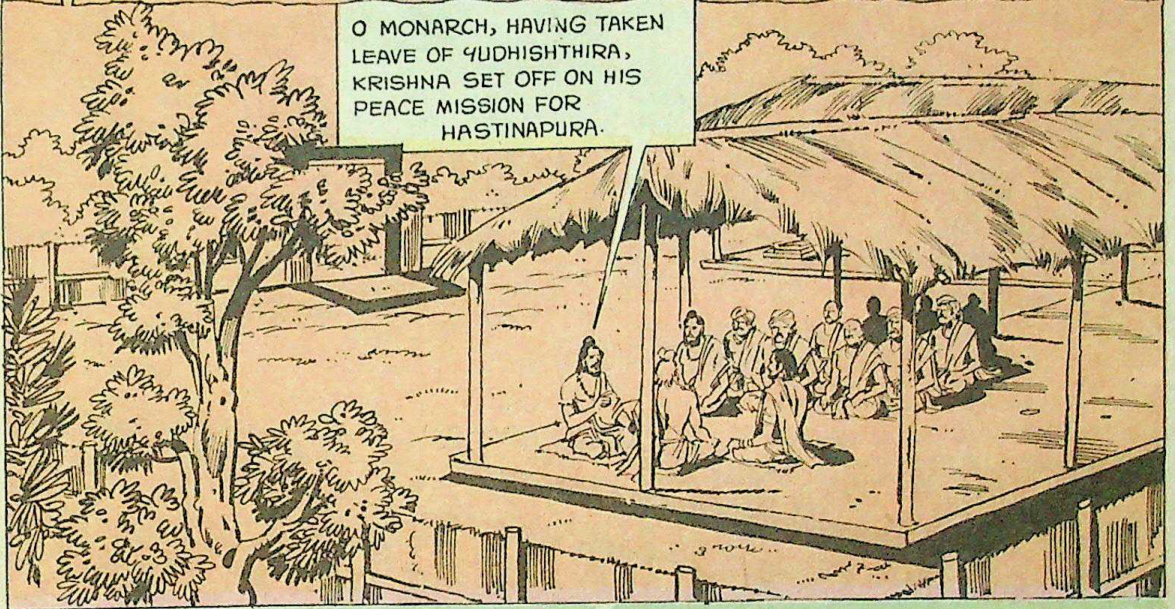
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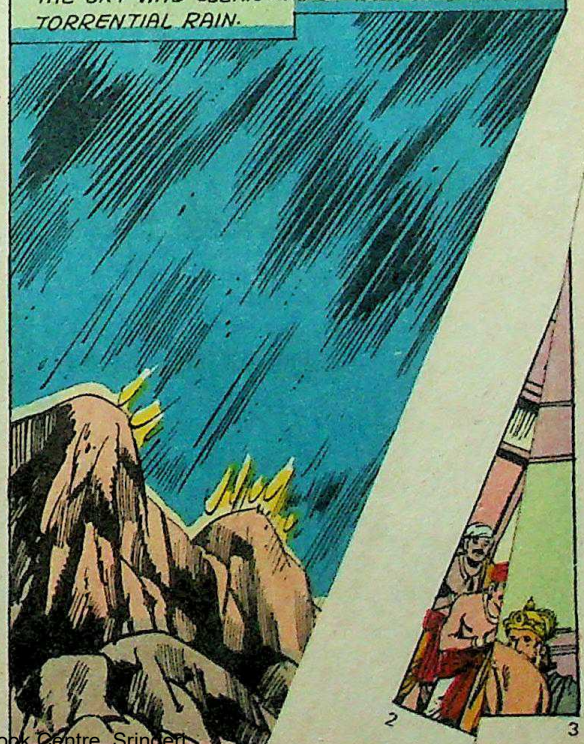
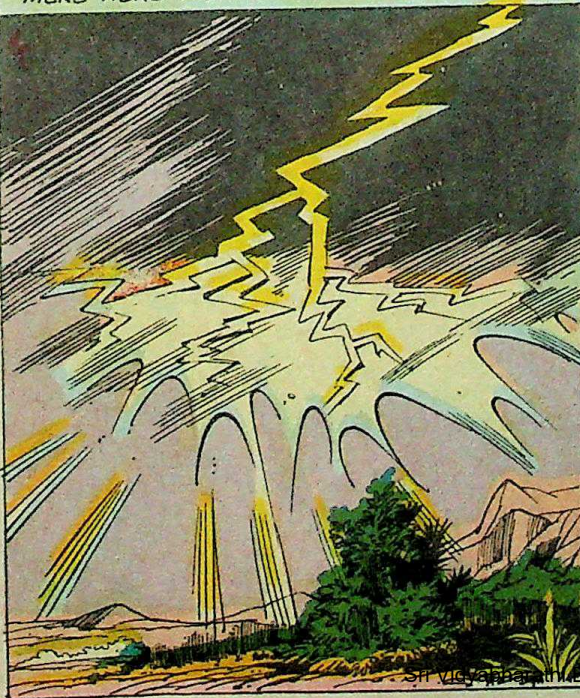
KRISHNA'S PEACE MISSION

O MONARCH, HAVING TAKEN
LEAVE OF YUDHISHTHIRA,
KRISHNA SET OFF ON HIS
PEACE MISSION FOR
HASTINAPURA.

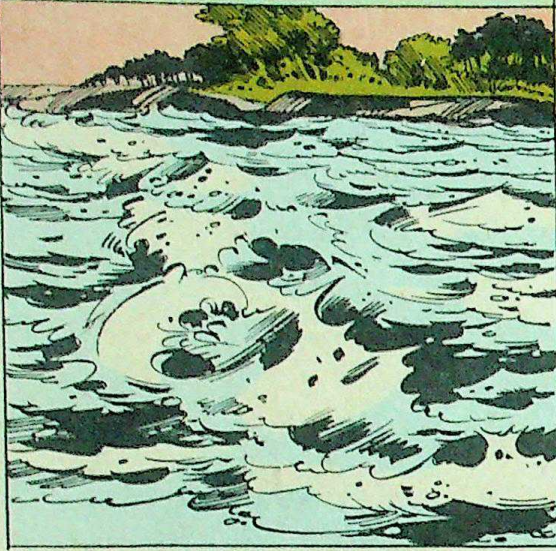


"AND STRANGE OMENS WERE SEEN ON THE
OCCASION. THOUGH THERE WERE NO CLOUDS,
THERE WERE THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.

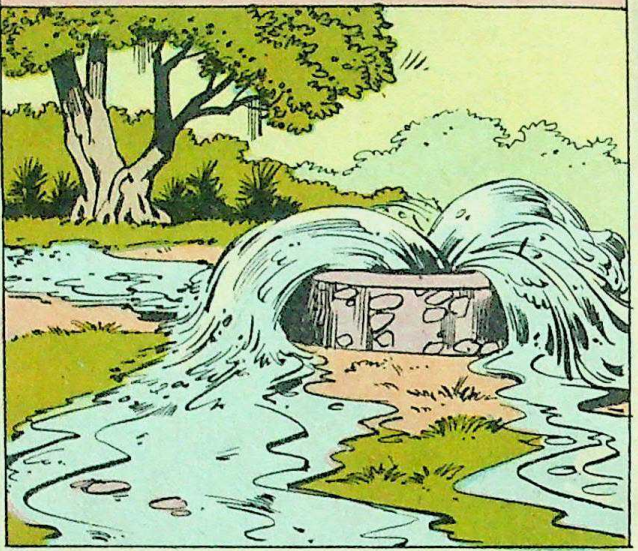
"THE SKY WAS CLEAR AND YET THERE WAS
TORRENTIAL RAIN.



"THE RIVERS FLOWED UPSTREAM."



"THE WELLS SPEWED OUT THEIR CONTENTS."



"BUT, ALONG THE ROUTE TAKEN BY KRISHNA, NATURE WAS REVEALED IN ALL ITS SPLENDOUR AND BEAUTY."



"WHEREVER HE WENT, HE RECEIVED AN ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION."



"AT VRIKASTHALA, ON THE WAY TO HASTINAPURA—"



"MEANWHILE, AT HASTINAPURA, A SPY
PRESENTED HIMSELF BEFORE KING
DHRTARASHTRA.

O GREAT KING,
KRISHNA IS ON
HIS WAY HERE.

"DHRTARASHTRA IMMEDIATELY CALLED VIDURA.

O VIDURA, WE MUST SPARE
NO EFFORT IN GIVING A
BIG WELCOME TO KRISHNA.
HE IS THE FOREMOST
AMONG MEN AND
WORTHY OF
WORSHIP.

HAVE A GRAND MANSION
BUILT ON HIS WAY HERE.
I WILL HONOUR HIM WITH SIXTEEN
GOLDEN CHARIOTS, EIGHT ELEPHANTS
AND MANY OTHER PRECIOUS
GIFTS. I WILL PERSONALLY GO WITH
ALL MY SONS AND GRANDSONS TO
WELCOME HIM. DURYODHANA WILL
NOT COME WITH ME.

"HEARING THIS, VIDURA SAID —

O KING, NO DOUBT KRISHNA
DESERVES ALL THIS. INDEED
HE DESERVES THE WHOLE EARTH.
BUT I KNOW YOUR MIND. YOU
DO NOT REALLY WISH TO HONOUR
HIM. THE TRUTH IS THAT
YOU THINK YOU COULD BRIBE
KRISHNA WITH YOUR GIFTS
AND DRIVE A WEDGE
BETWEEN HIM AND
THE PANDAVAS.

THAT, O KING, WILL NEVER BE POSSIBLE.
KRISHNA WILL NEVER ACCEPT ANY OF
YOUR GIFTS. IF YOU REALLY WISH TO
MAKE HIM HAPPY, AGREE TO WHAT
HE IS COMING HERE FOR —
A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT
BETWEEN YOUR SONS AND
THE PANDAVAS.

"DURYODHANA SAID—

O KING, I TOO THINK YOU WILL NOT SUCCEED IN ALIENATING KRISHNA FROM THE PANDAVAS. DO NOT GO TOO FAR TO PLEASE HIM. HE MAY THINK WE ARE AFRAID OF HIM.

"BHEESHMA INTERPOSED—

WE MUST PAY HEED TO WHAT KRISHNA SAYS AND ACCEPT HIS ADVICE WITHOUT QUESTION. HE IS VIRTUOUS AS WELL AS INTRANSIGENT.

"BUT DURYODHANA PERSISTED.

O GRANDSIRE, THERE IS NOT THE LEAST LIKELIHOOD OF MY SHARING THE KINGDOM WITH THE PANDAVAS. LISTEN, EVERYBODY, TO MY PLAN. I WANT TO IMPRISON KRISHNA ON WHOM THE PANDAVAS RELY SO MUCH. WITHOUT HIM, THE PANDAVAS AND THEIR ALLIES WILL BE EASILY OVERCOME BY US. DO SUGGEST HOW TO GO ABOUT MY PLAN.

"DHRTARASHTRA WAS SHOCKED.—

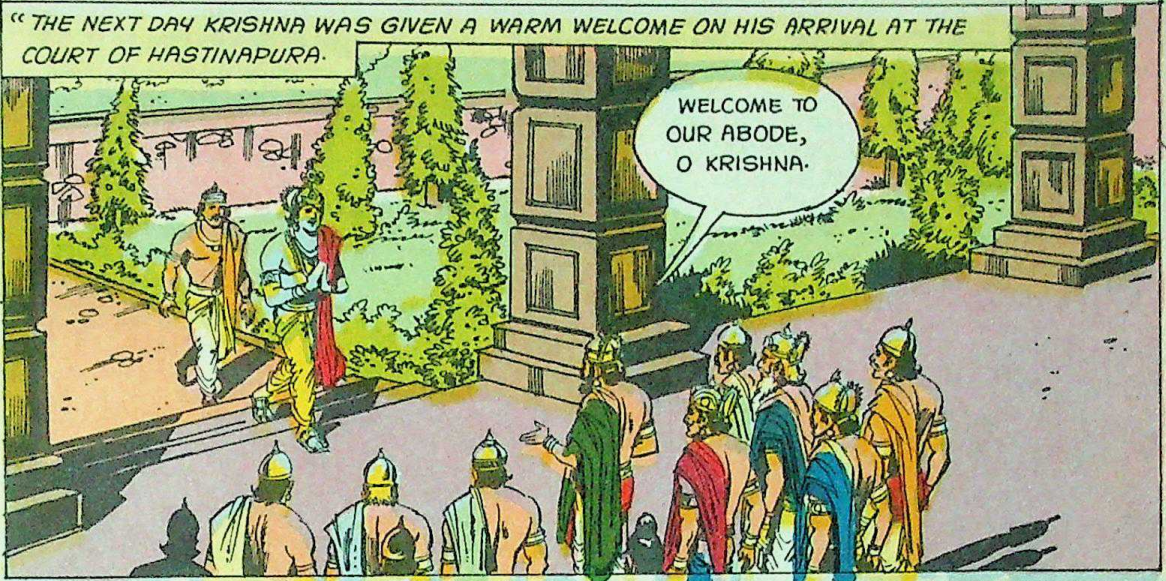
O DURYODHANA! NEVER SAY SUCH A THING AGAIN! KRISHNA COMES TO US AS AN AMBASSADOR AND SHOULD BE TREATED AS SUCH!

"BHEESHMA SAID —

O KING, DURYODHANA'S HOUR HAS COME. DISREGARDING THE ADVICE OF HIS WELL-WISHERS HE CHOOSES THE PATH OF DESTRUCTION. I DO NOT WISH TO HEAR ANY MORE OF HIS RAVINGS.

"AND A FURIOUS BHEESHMA STALKED OUT OF THE COURT.

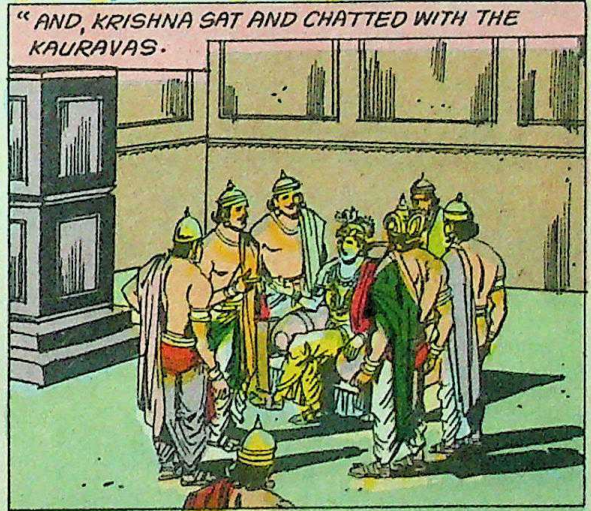
"THE NEXT DAY KRISHNA WAS GIVEN A WARM WELCOME ON HIS ARRIVAL AT THE COURT OF HASTINAPURA."



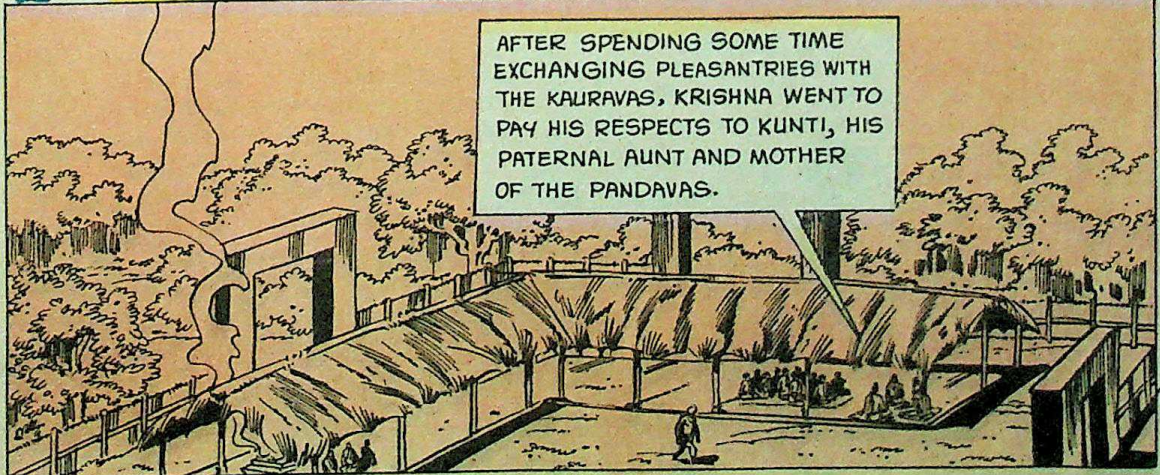
PLEASE SIT DOWN FOR A WHILE YOU MUST BE TIRED AFTER YOUR LONG JOURNEY.



"AND, KRISHNA SAT AND CHATTED WITH THE KAURAVAS."



AFTER SPENDING SOME TIME EXCHANGING PLEASANTRIES WITH THE KAURAVAS, KRISHNA WENT TO PAY HIS RESPECTS TO KUNTI, HIS PATERNAL AUNT AND MOTHER OF THE PANDAVAS.



"HER VOICE CHOKED WITH GRIEF, KUNTI SAID TO KRISHNA—

HOW ARE MY SONS ? THEY WERE USED TO A LIFE OF COMFORT IN PALATIAL MANSIONS. HOW ARE THEY FARING IN THE FORESTS INFESTED WITH SAVAGE BEASTS?



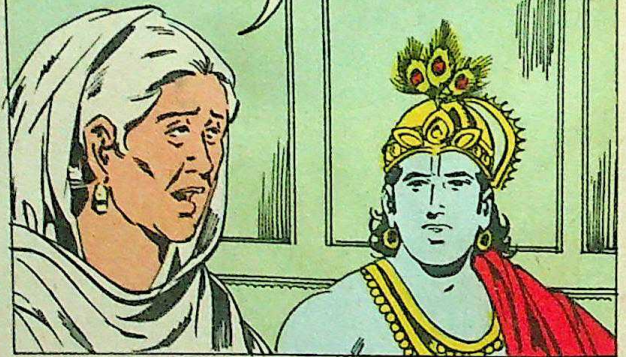
HOW IS MY VIRTUOUS YUDHISHTHIRA AND HOW IS MY POWERFUL BHEEMA WHO IS EASILY AROUSED TO ANGER ? HOW IS MY ARJUNA, THAT DEARLY LOVED COUSIN AND FRIEND OF OURS ? ARE THE TWINS IN GOOD HEALTH ? AND MY DEAREST DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, THE BEAUTIFUL PANCHALI, IS SHE WELL ?



HOW SHE HAS SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF THE VILE KAURAVAS ! O KRISHNA, NEVER IN MY LIFE HAVE I FELT AS GRIEVED AS WHEN I SAW DRAUPADI BEING DRAGGED INTO THE KAURAVA ASSEMBLY AND DISGRACED IN FRONT OF EVERYBODY.



WIDOWHOOD, POVERTY, DEPENDENCE ON CHARITY AND PROLONGED SEPARATION FROM MY SONS HAVE CAUSED ME GREAT SUFFERING.



I WAS DISTRESSED AT MY NOBLE SONS BEING DRIVEN INTO THE FOREST AND NOW THEY HAVE EVEN BEEN DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIVELIHOOD. WE DESERVE HAPPINESS, O KRISHNA, AFTER LONG YEARS OF AGONY.

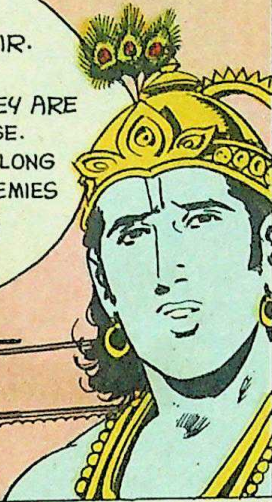


O KRISHNA, TELL MY SONS THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR THEM TO SHOW THEMSELVES AS TRUE KSHATRIYAS. TELL THEM THAT IF THEY DO NOT UPHOLD THEIR DHARMA NOW, I SHALL FORSAKE THEM FOR EVER.



"KRISHNA CONSOLED KUNTI —

O AUNT, DO NOT
GIVE IN TO DESPAIR.
YOU HAVE BORNE
HEROIC SONS. THEY ARE
VIRTUOUS AND WISE.
THEY WILL BEFORE LONG
VANQUISH THEIR ENEMIES
AND BECOME LORDS
OF THE WORLD.



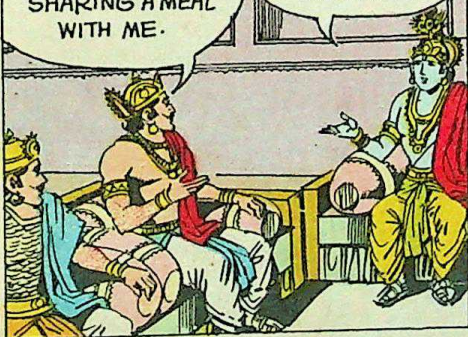
"THEREAFTER KRISHNA PROCEEDED TO DURYODHANA'S
PALACE."

WELCOME,
O KRISHNA.



O KRISHNA,
DO ME THE
HONOUR OF
SHARING A MEAL
WITH ME.

O DURYODHANA,
I MUST DECLINE
YOUR
INVITATION.



O KRISHNA, YOU ARE IMPARTIAL
AND WISH US WELL AS YOU
DO THE PANDAVAS. TELL ME,
WHY DO YOU REFUSE
MY HOSPITALITY?



O DURYODHANA,
ENVOYS MAY EAT ONLY
AFTER THEY SUCCEED IN
THEIR MISSION. I WILL
GLADLY ACCEPT YOUR
HOSPITALITY AFTER
MY TASK HAS BEEN
SUCCESSFULLY
COMPLETED.



O KRISHNA, WHETHER OR NOT YOU
ARE SUCCESSFUL, WE WANT TO
MAKE YOU HAPPY. WE ARE NOT
HOSTILE TO YOU. THE WAY YOU
LOOK UPON US IS UNBECOMING
OF YOU.

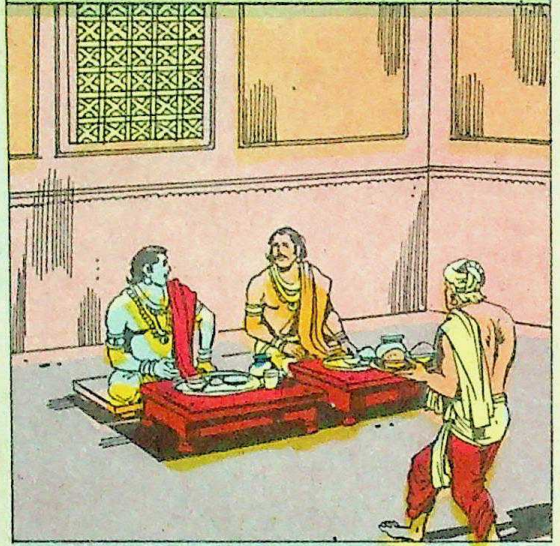
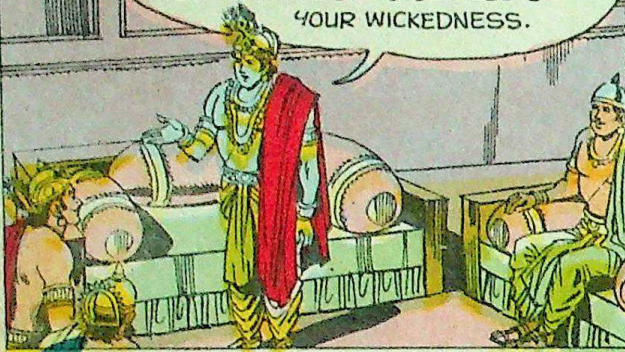


"KRISHNA ROSE —

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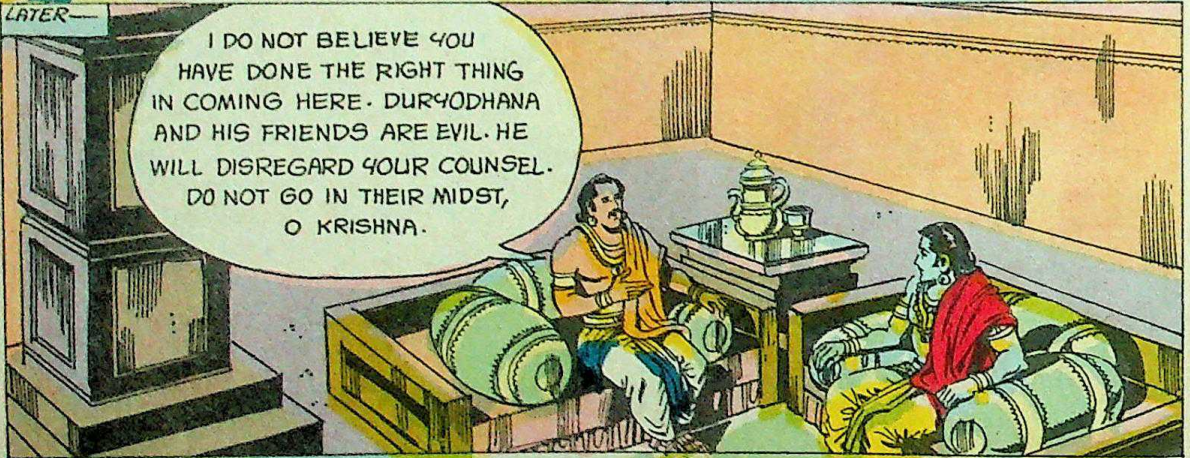
SO SAYING, HE WENT TO VIDURA'S PLACE AND TOOK HIS FOOD THERE.

O DURYODHANA, ONE ACCEPTS AN INVITATION TO A MEAL EITHER OUT OF FRIENDSHIP AND GOODWILL OR OUT OF DIRE NEED. YOU HAVE NEVER BY ANY ACT OF YOURS INSPIRED FRIENDSHIP IN ME. NOR AM I IN EXTREME NEED. YOUR FOOD IS DEFILED BY YOUR WICKEDNESS.

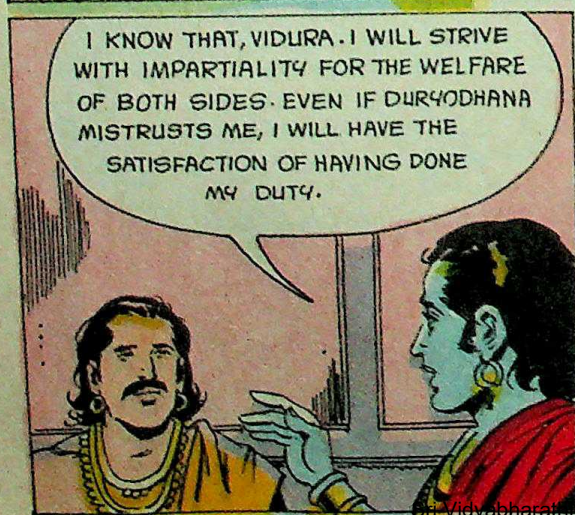


LATER—

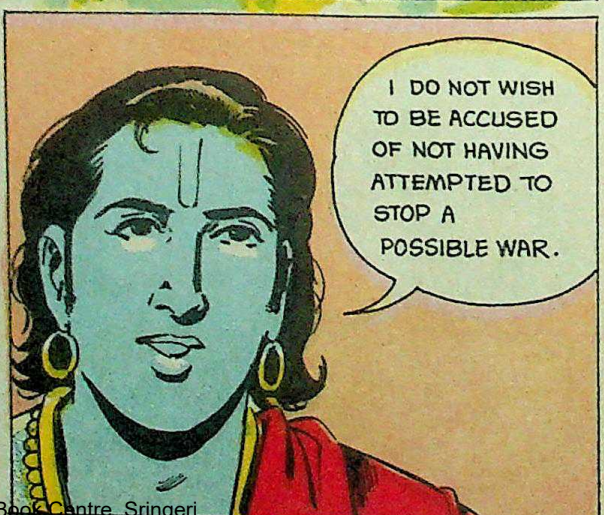
I DO NOT BELIEVE YOU HAVE DONE THE RIGHT THING IN COMING HERE. DURYODHANA AND HIS FRIENDS ARE EVIL. HE WILL DISREGARD YOUR COUNSEL. DO NOT GO IN THEIR MIDST, O KRISHNA.



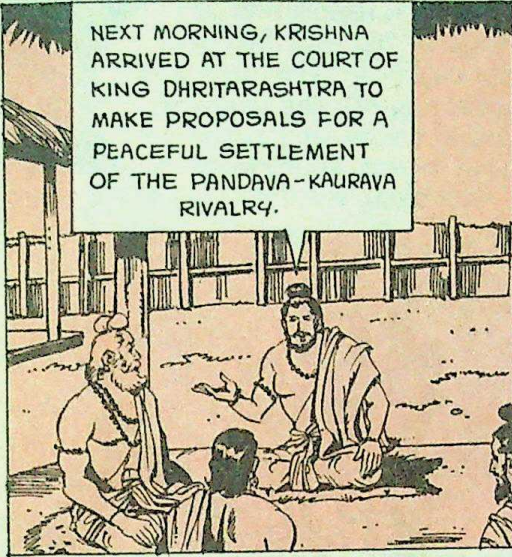
I KNOW THAT, VIDURA. I WILL STRIVE WITH IMPARTIALITY FOR THE WELFARE OF BOTH SIDES. EVEN IF DURYODHANA MISTRUSTS ME, I WILL HAVE THE SATISFACTION OF HAVING DONE MY DUTY.



I DO NOT WISH TO BE ACCUSED OF NOT HAVING ATTEMPTED TO STOP A POSSIBLE WAR.



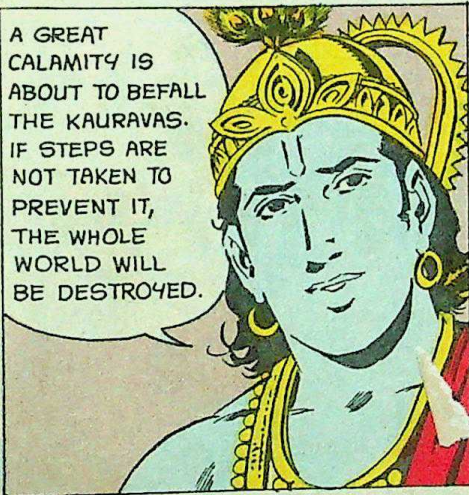
NEXT MORNING, KRISHNA ARRIVED AT THE COURT OF KING DHRTIRASHTRA TO MAKE PROPOSALS FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE PANDAVA-KAURAVA RIVALRY.



O KING, I COME HERE TO PREVENT BLOODSHED AND DESTRUCTION AND TO ESTABLISH LASTING PEACE BETWEEN THE KAURAVAS AND THE PANDAVAS.



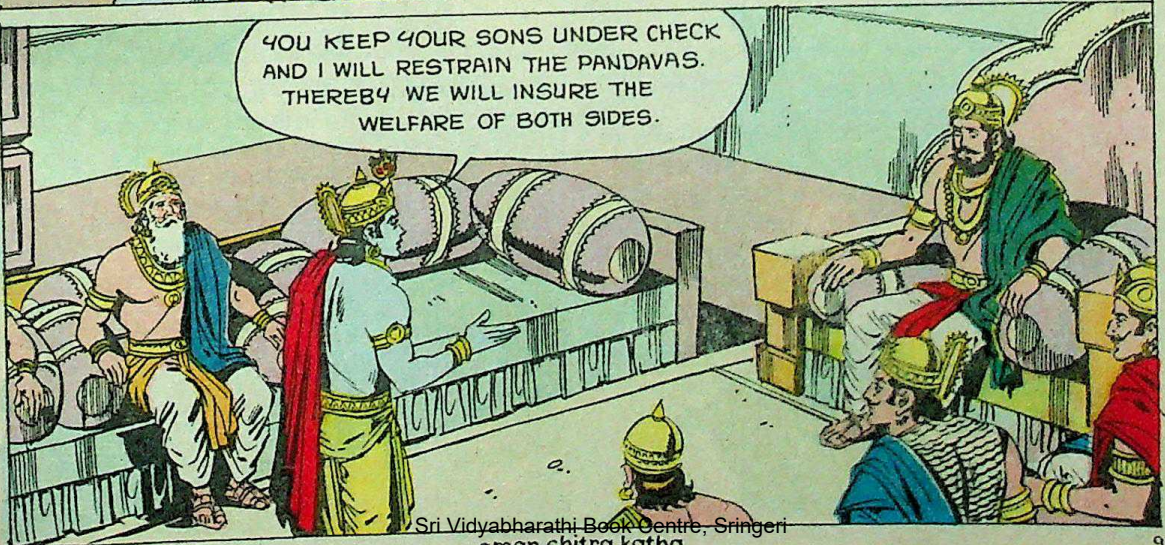
A GREAT CALAMITY IS ABOUT TO BEFALL THE KAURAVAS. IF STEPS ARE NOT TAKEN TO PREVENT IT, THE WHOLE WORLD WILL BE DESTROYED.

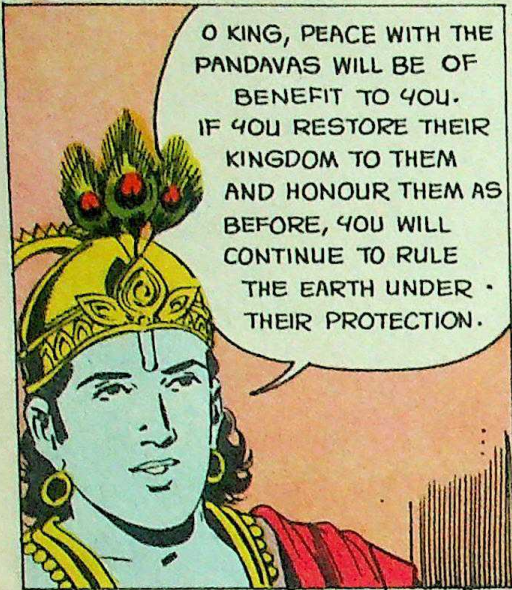


IF YOU SO DESIRE, O DHRTIRASHTRA, IT IS YET POSSIBLE TO PREVENT THIS DESTRUCTION.

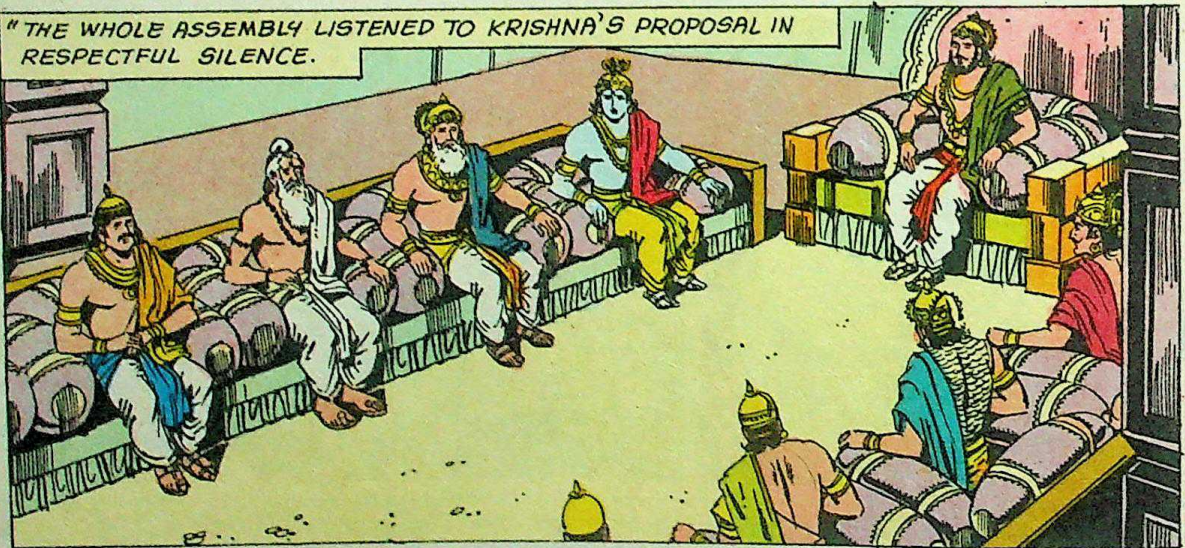


YOU KEEP YOUR SONS UNDER CHECK AND I WILL RESTRAIN THE PANDAVAS. THEREBY WE WILL INSURE THE WELFARE OF BOTH SIDES.

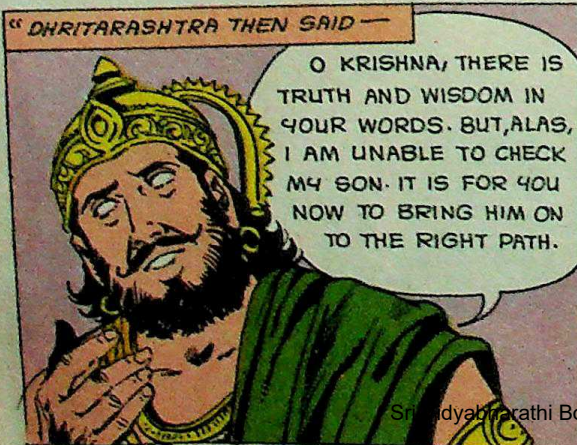




"THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY LISTENED TO KRISHNA'S PROPOSAL IN RESPECTFUL SILENCE."



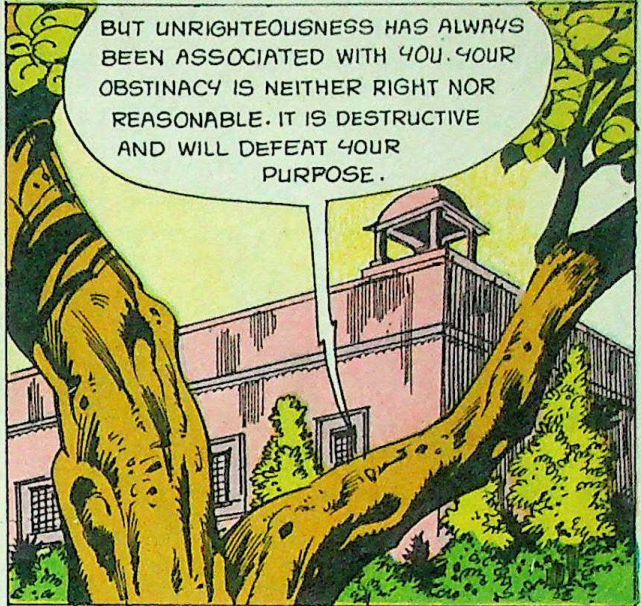
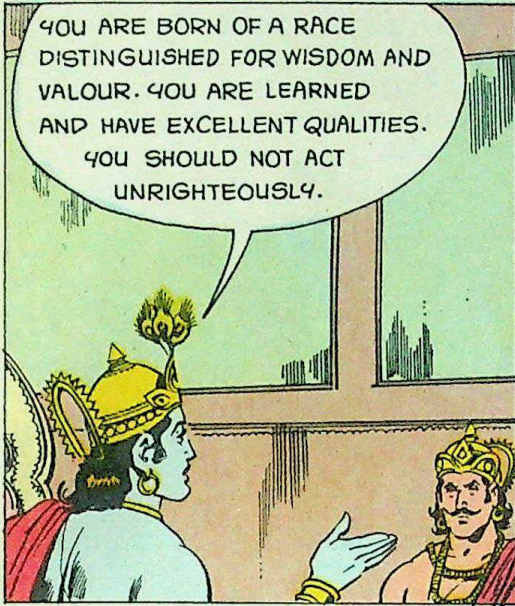
"DHRTARASHTRA THEN SAID —

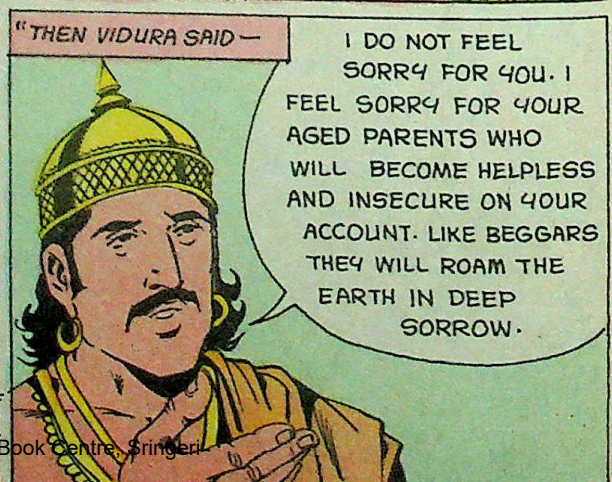
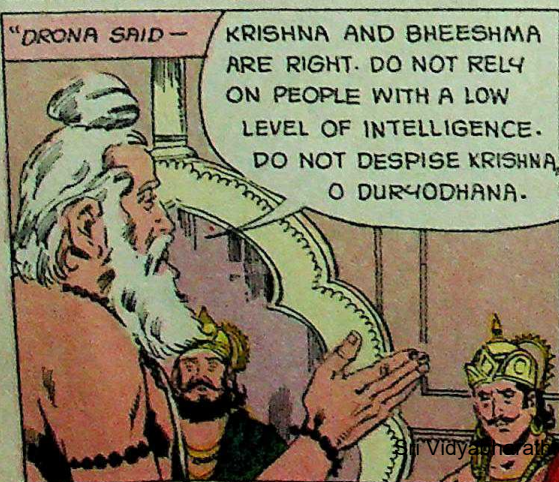
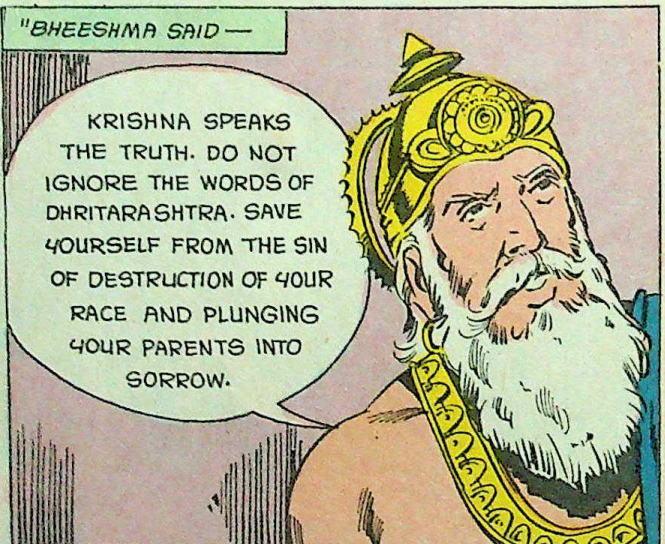
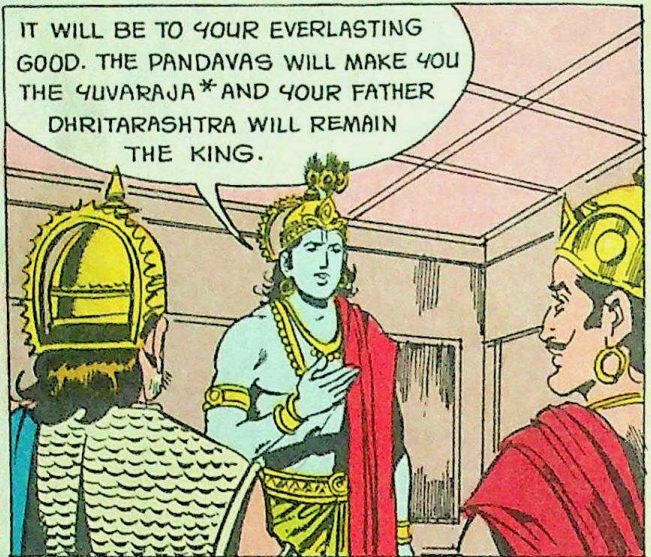
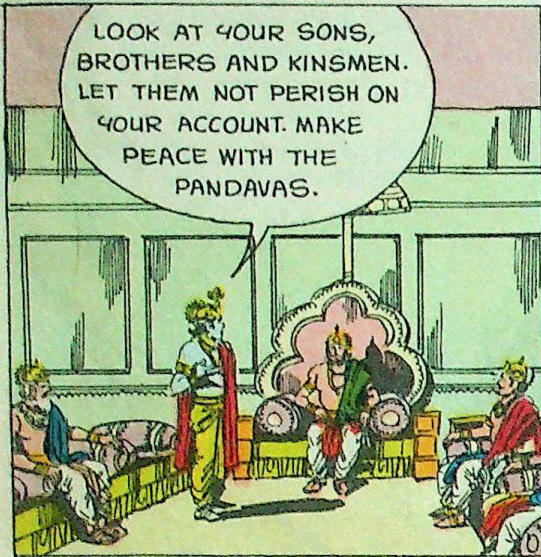


"KRISHNA SAID —



KRISHNA'S PEACE MISSION



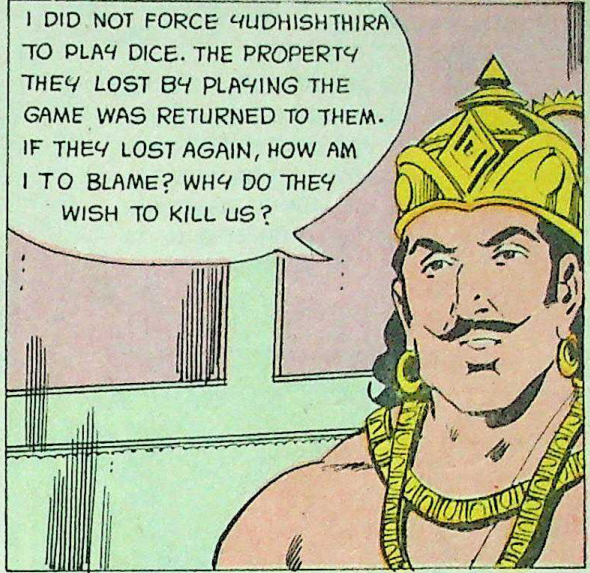


"HEARING ALL THIS, DURYODHANA SAID TO KRISHNA.

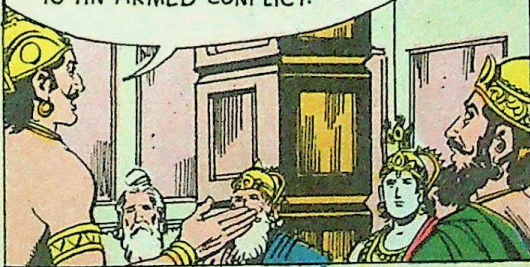
HOW UNJUST THAT EACH OF YOU SHOULD FIND FAULT WITH ME ALONE! THERE IS NOTHING REPREHENSIBLE IN MY BEHAVIOUR.



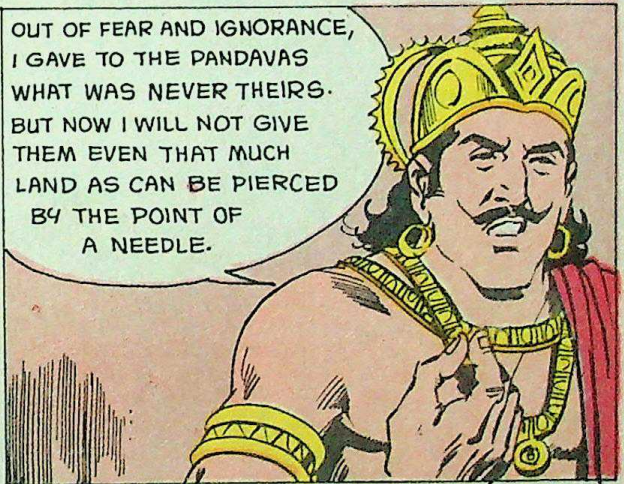
I DID NOT FORCE YUDHISHTHIRA TO PLAY DICE. THE PROPERTY THEY LOST BY PLAYING THE GAME WAS RETURNED TO THEM. IF THEY LOST AGAIN, HOW AM I TO BLAME? WHY DO THEY WISH TO KILL US?



THE KINGDOM BEQUEATHED TO ME BY MY FATHER WILL NEVER BE GIVEN AWAY SO LONG AS I AM ALIVE. WHILE KING DHRITARASHTRA IS ALIVE, WE AND THE PANDAVAS SHOULD LIVE PEACEFULLY, WITHOUT RESORTING TO AN ARMED CONFLICT.



OUT OF FEAR AND IGNORANCE, I GAVE TO THE PANDAVAS WHAT WAS NEVER THEIRS. BUT NOW I WILL NOT GIVE THEM EVEN THAT MUCH LAND AS CAN BE PIERCED BY THE POINT OF A NEEDLE.



"KRISHNA REPLIED, HIS EYES FLASHING WITH ANGER —

DURYODHANA, THE TRUTH IS THAT YOU GOT SHAKUNI TO PLAY A DECEITFUL GAME. AND YOU HAVE ALWAYS PLAYED FOUL WITH THE PANDAVAS.



YOU WISH FOR THE DEATH OF HEROES? THEN YOU SHALL HAVE IT. SOON THERE WILL BE A FEARFUL SLAUGHTER OF THE KAURAVAS AT THE HANDS OF THE PANDAVAS.



"DUSHASANA SAID—

O DURYODHANA, I SUSPECT THAT IF YOU DO NOT GIVE IN TO KRISHNA'S PROPOSAL, THEN YOU, KARNA AND I WILL BE BOUND HAND AND FOOT AND TURNED OVER TO THE PANDAVAS.



"DURYODHANA ROSE, SPEECHLESS WITH RAGE...

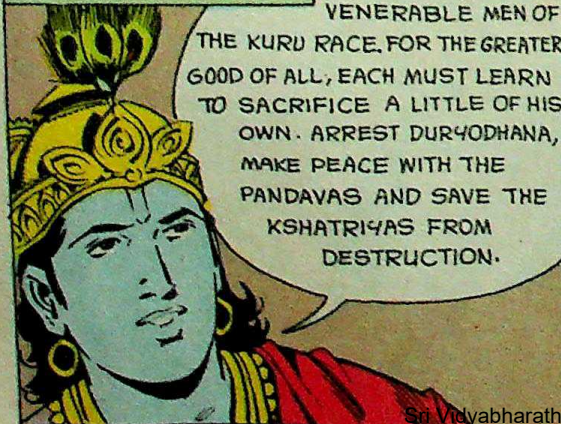


"... AND WITHOUT A WORD, HE STALKED OUT OF THE COURT, FOLLOWED BY ALL HIS BROTHERS AND COUNSELLORS.



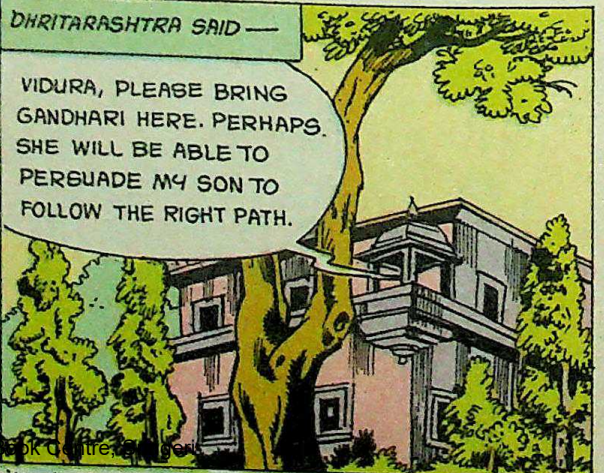
"THEN KRISHNA SAID—

LISTEN TO ME, O VENERABLE MEN OF THE KURU RACE. FOR THE GREATER GOOD OF ALL, EACH MUST LEARN TO SACRIFICE A LITTLE OF HIS OWN. ARREST DURYODHANA, MAKE PEACE WITH THE PANDAVAS AND SAVE THE KSHATRIYAS FROM DESTRUCTION.



DHRITARASHTRA SAID—

VIDURA, PLEASE BRING GANDHARI HERE. PERHAPS SHE WILL BE ABLE TO PERSUADE MY SON TO FOLLOW THE RIGHT PATH.



"GANDHARI WAS BROUGHT TO THE COURT—

O GANDHARI, YOUR WICKED SON
IS BENT UPON BRINGING ABOUT
TOTAL DESTRUCTION. DISREGARD-
ING THE ADVICE OF ELDERS, HE HAS
INSULTED ALL OF US BY STALKING
OUT WITHOUT A WORD.

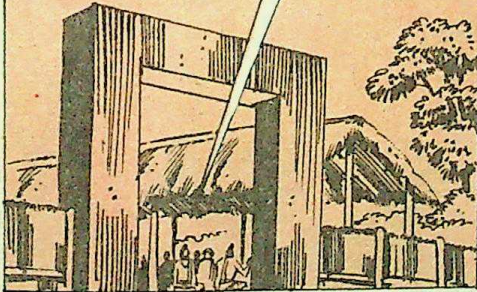


"GANDHARI REPLIED—

O KING, YOU INDULGED
YOUR SON TOO MUCH AND
ARE HENCE RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE PRESENT
SITUATION.



ON DHRITARASHTRA'S
INSTRUCTION VIDURA
SUMMONED DURYODHANA
BACK INTO COURT.

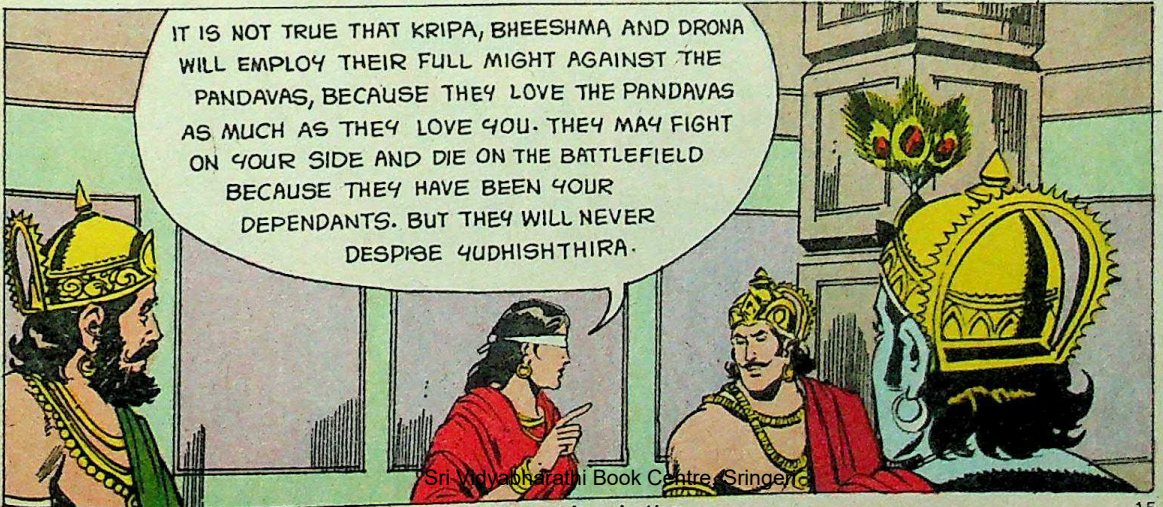


WHEN DURYODHANA
ARRIVED—

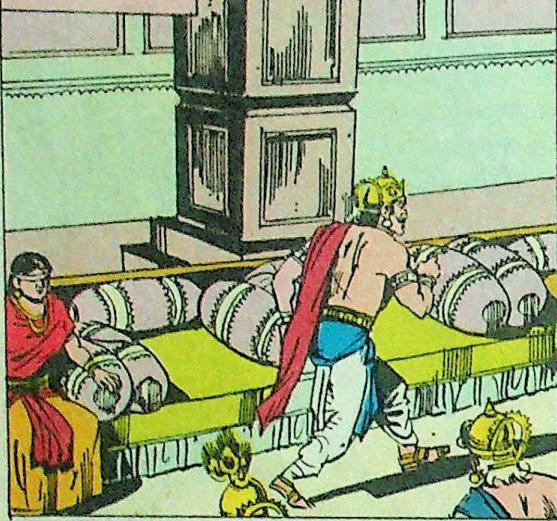
O DURYODHANA,
LISTEN TO ME FOR I
SPEAK FOR YOUR
WELFARE.



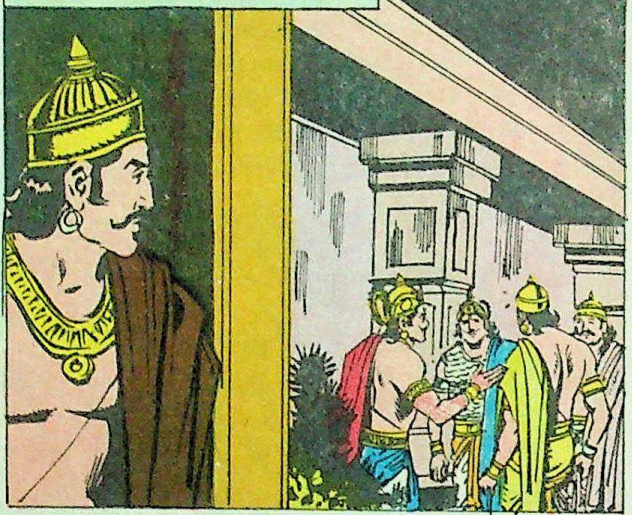
IT IS NOT TRUE THAT KRIPA, BHEESHMA AND DRONA
WILL EMPLOY THEIR FULL MIGHT AGAINST THE
PANDAVAS, BECAUSE THEY LOVE THE PANDAVAS
AS MUCH AS THEY LOVE YOU. THEY MAY FIGHT
ON YOUR SIDE AND DIE ON THE BATTLEFIELD
BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN YOUR
DEPENDANTS. BUT THEY WILL NEVER
DESPISE YUDHISHTHIRA.



"DURYODHANA ONCE AGAIN STORMED OUT OF THE COURT."



"THEN HE GOT TOGETHER WITH SHAKUNI, KARNA AND DUHSHASANA..."



"... AND HATCHED A CONSPIRACY."

BEFORE KRISHNA, BHEESHMA AND DHRTARASHTRA HAVE US ARRESTED, WE MUST TAKE KRISHNA CAPTIVE. IT WILL DEMORALISE AND PARALYSE THE PANDAVAS.



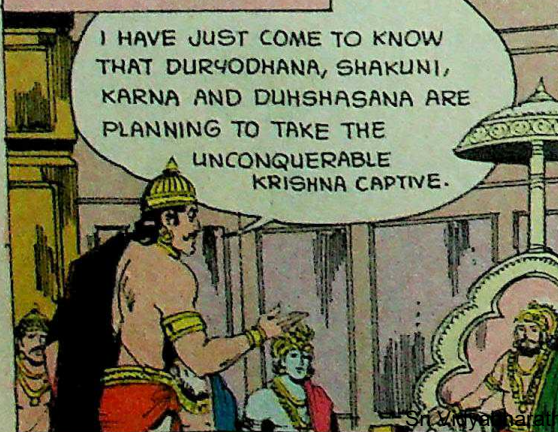
"THE ASTUTE SATYAKI FORESAW THE SCHEME. HE CALLED KRITAVARMAN AND SAID —"

GET OUR TROOPS READY FOR BATTLE. MEANWHILE I SHALL INFORM KRISHNA OF THE CONSPIRACY.



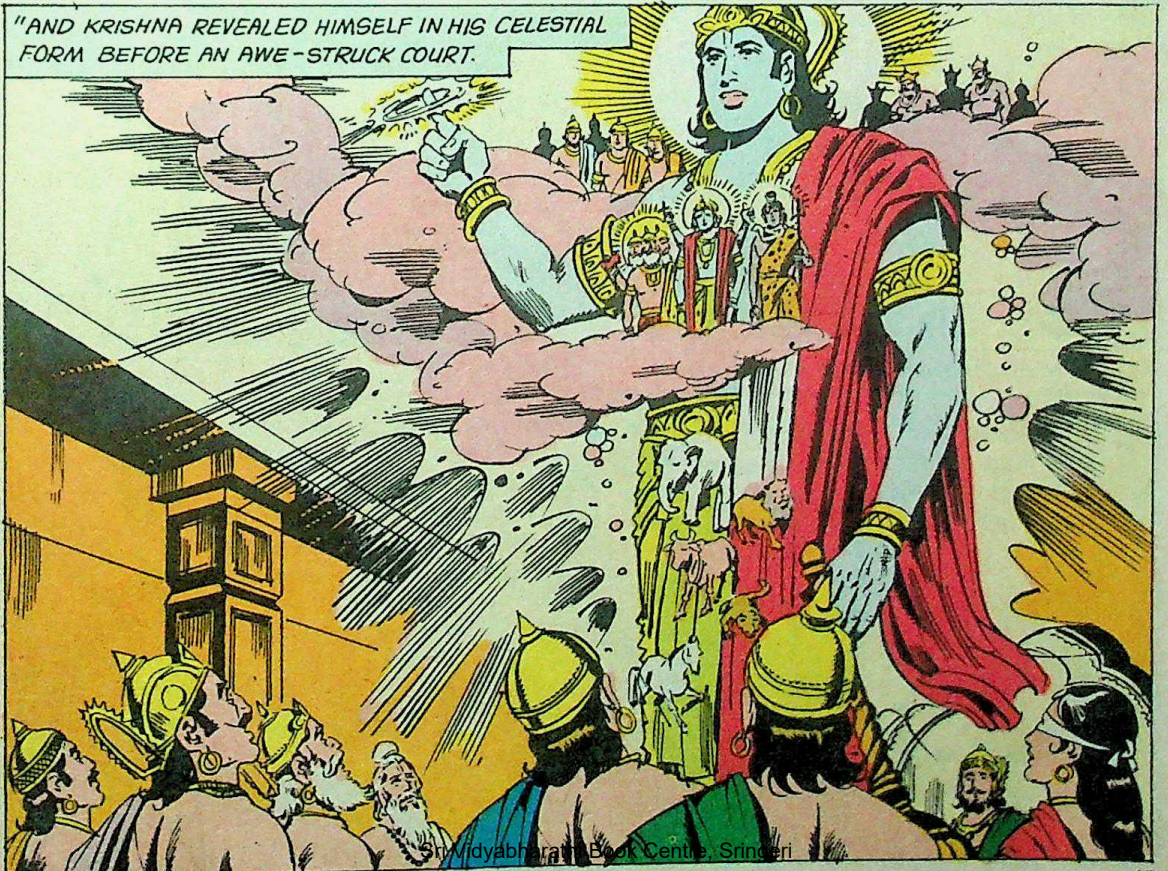
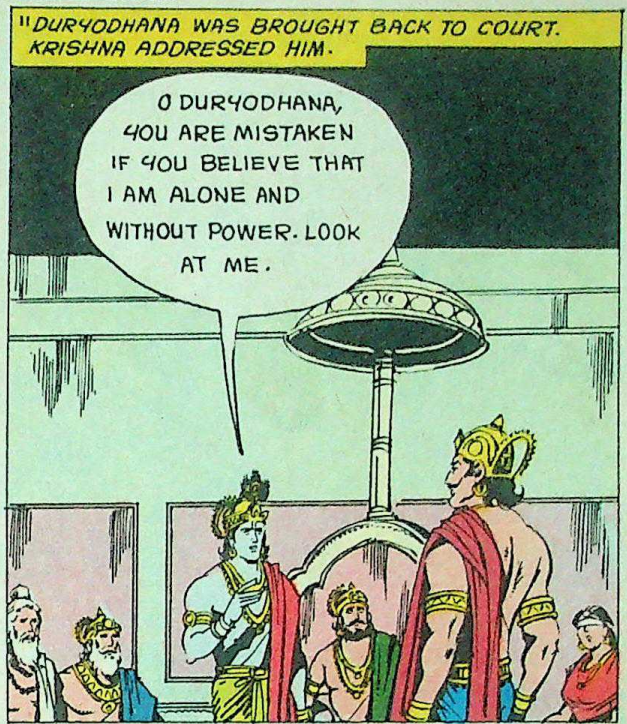
"SATYAKI THEN ENTERED THE KAURAVA COURT AND ANNOUNCED —"

I HAVE JUST COME TO KNOW THAT DURYODHANA, SHAKUNI, KARNA AND DUHSHASANA ARE PLANNING TO TAKE THE UNCONQUERABLE KRISHNA CAPTIVE.

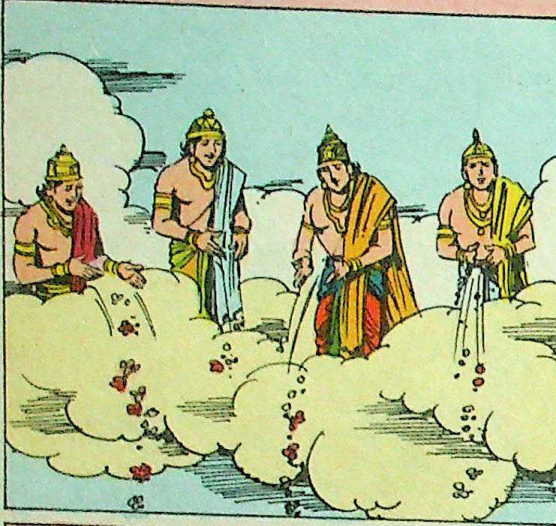


O KING, YOUR SON BELIEVES HE CAN TAKE ME PRISONER. I CAN TAKE ALL KAURAVAS PRISONER SINGLE-HANDED. BUT REST ASSURED, I SHALL NOT DO ANYTHING DISHONOURABLE.

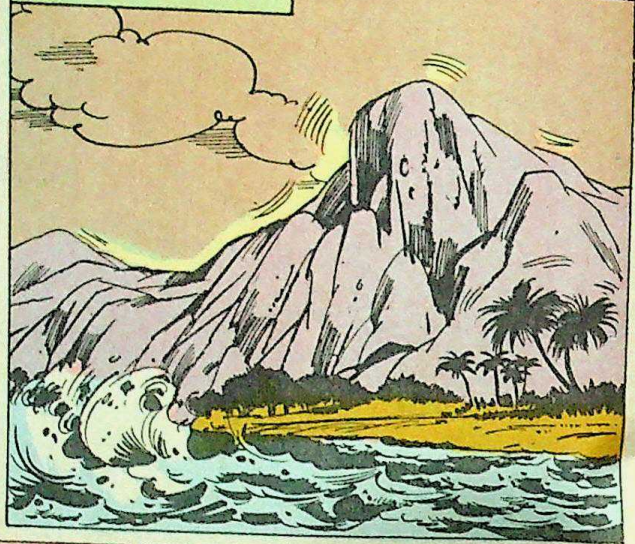




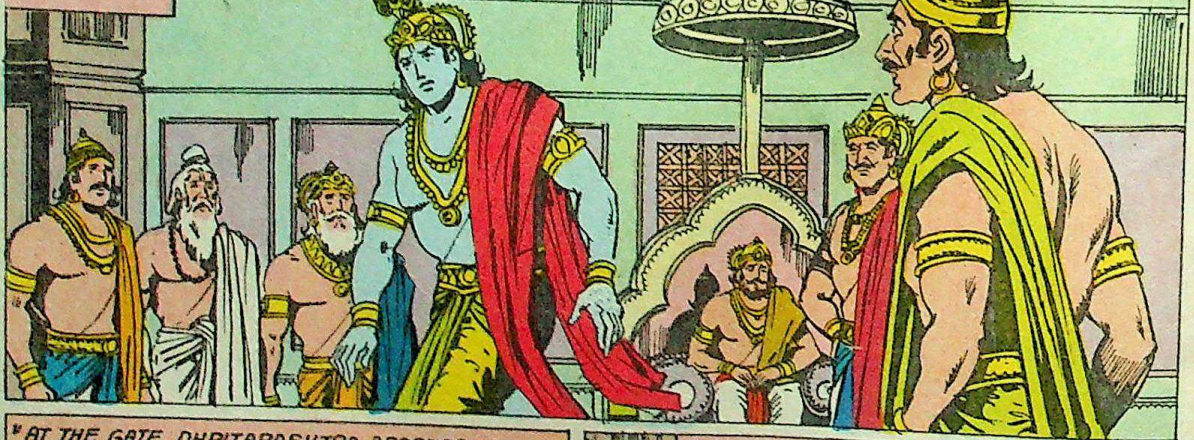
"SEEING THE DIVINE FORM, THE GODS
SHOWERED FLOWERS FROM ABOVE.



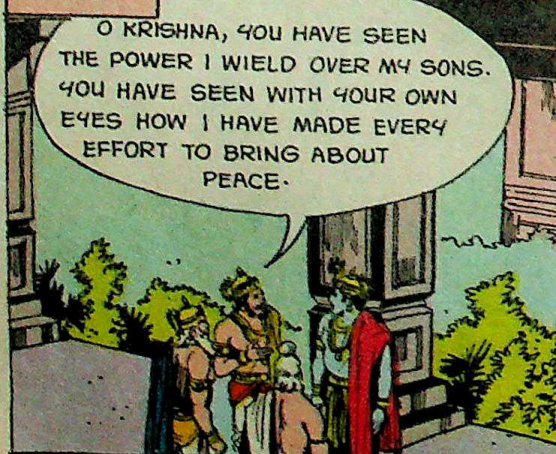
"THE WHOLE EARTH TREMBLED AND THE OCEANS
BECAME AGITATED.



"THEN ASSUMING HIS NORMAL FORM, KRISHNA ROSE AND WALKED OUT OF
THE COURT.

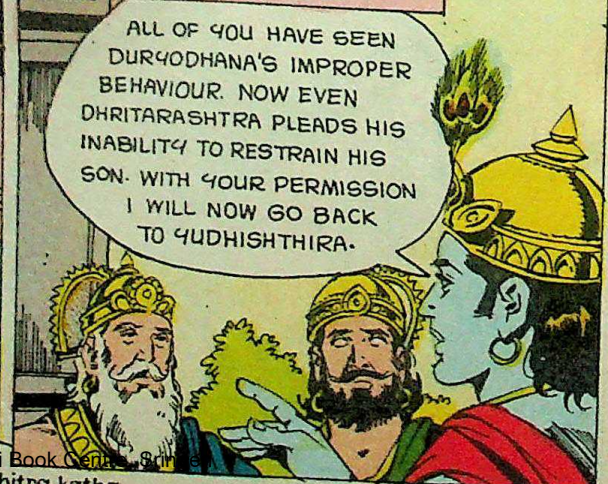


"AT THE GATE, DHRITARASHTRA ADDRESSED
KRISHNA—



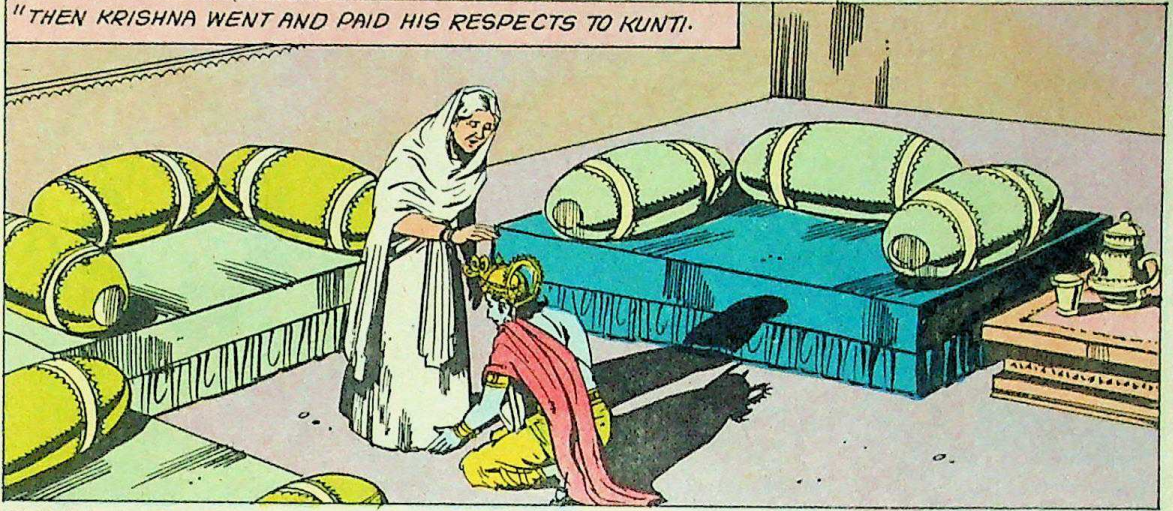
O KRISHNA, YOU HAVE SEEN
THE POWER I WIELD OVER MY SONS.
YOU HAVE SEEN WITH YOUR OWN
EYES HOW I HAVE MADE EVERY
EFFORT TO BRING ABOUT
PEACE.

"KRISHNA REPLIED —



ALL OF YOU HAVE SEEN
DURYODHANA'S IMPROPER
BEHAVIOUR. NOW EVEN
DHRTIRASHTRA PLEADS HIS
INABILITY TO RESTRAIN HIS
SON. WITH YOUR PERMISSION
I WILL NOW GO BACK
TO GUDHISHTHIRA.

"THEN KRISHNA WENT AND PAID HIS RESPECTS TO KUNTI.



O AUNT, WE TRIED IN VAIN TO PERSUADE DURYODHANA FOR A PEACEFUL UNDERSTANDING. BUT HE REFUSED TO SEE REASON. I AM NOW GOING BACK TO YOUR SONS. DO YOU HAVE ANY MESSAGE FOR THEM ?

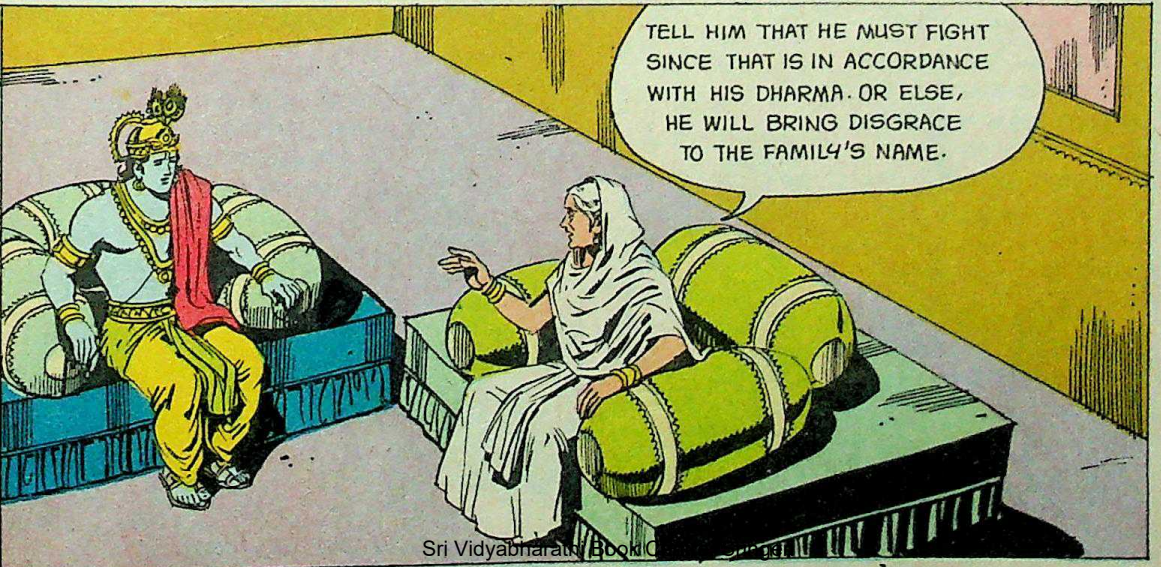


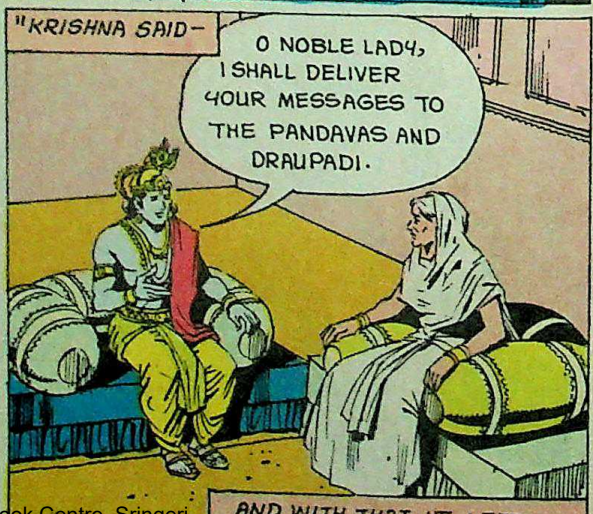
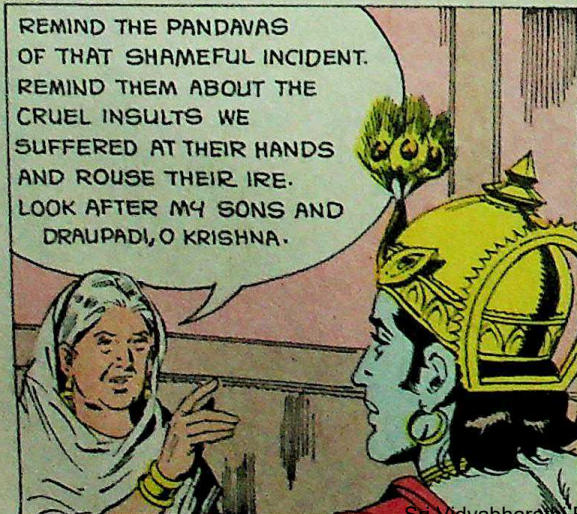
"KUNTI SAID —

TELL GUDHISHTHIRA, THE KINGDOM THAT RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO HIM LIES IN THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY. HE MUST TRY EVERY MEANS TO RECOVER IT— IF NOT BY CONCILIATION, GENEROSITY, THEN BY INCITING DISSENSION IN HIS RANKS OR BY INFLECTING PUNISHMENT.



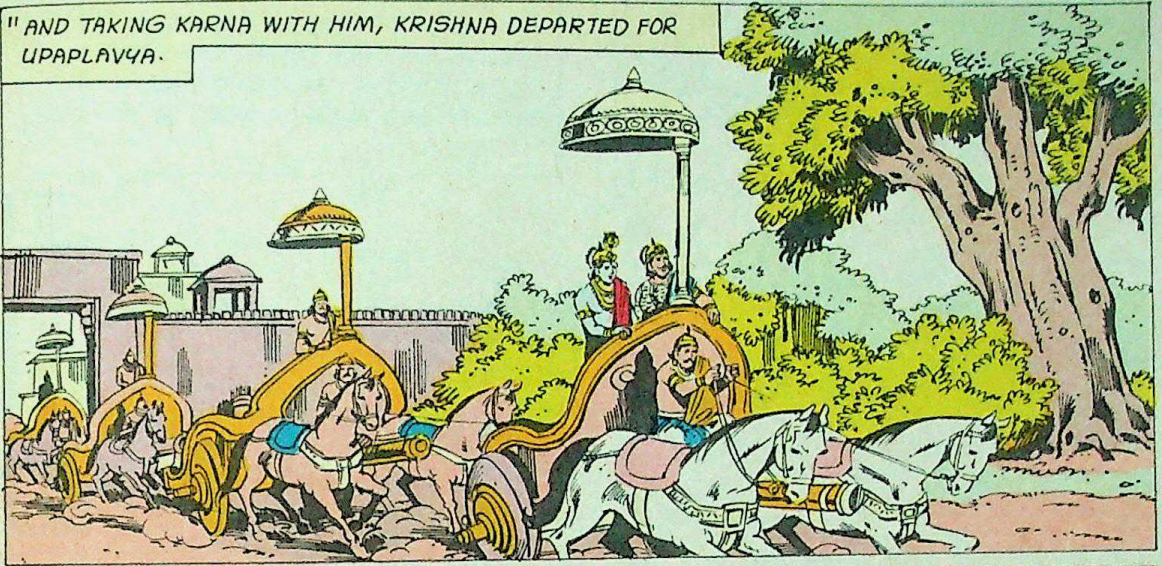
TELL HIM THAT HE MUST FIGHT SINCE THAT IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS DHARMA. OR ELSE, HE WILL BRING DISGRACE TO THE FAMILY'S NAME.





AND WITH THAT, HE LEFT.

"AND TAKING KARNA WITH HIM, KRISHNA DEPARTED FOR
UPAPLAVYA.

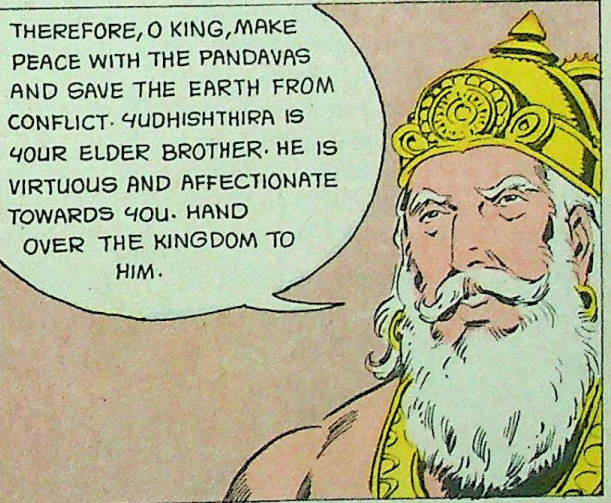


"BACK AT THE COURT OF HASTINAPURA,
BHEESHMA SAID TO DURYODHANA —

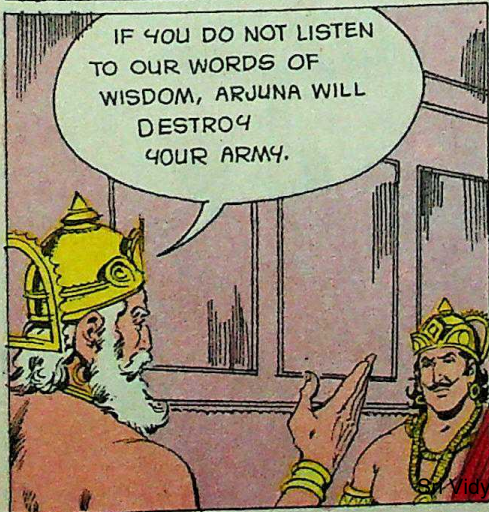
O DURYODHANA, YOU
MUST HAVE HEARD KUNTI'S
MESSAGE TO THE PANDAVAS.
THEY WILL NEVER DISOBEY
HER WORDS.



THEREFORE, O KING, MAKE
PEACE WITH THE PANDAVAS
AND SAVE THE EARTH FROM
CONFLICT. YUDHISHTHIRA IS
YOUR ELDER BROTHER. HE IS
VIRTUOUS AND AFFECTIONATE
TOWARDS YOU. HAND
OVER THE KINGDOM TO
HIM.

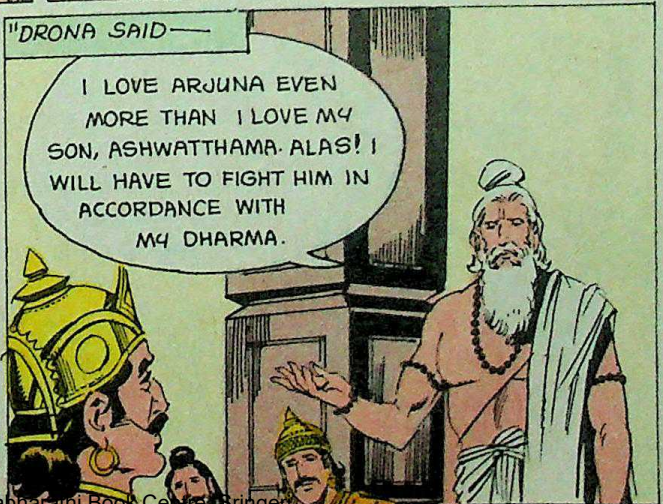


IF YOU DO NOT LISTEN
TO OUR WORDS OF
WISDOM, ARJUNA WILL
DESTROY
YOUR ARMY.

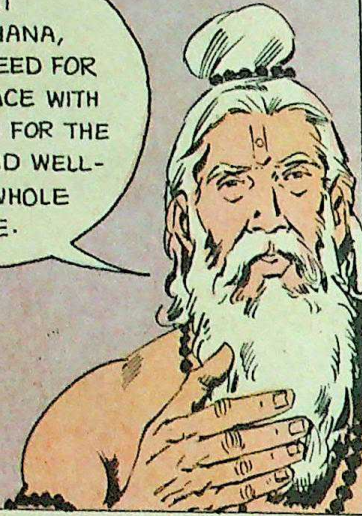


"DRONA SAID —

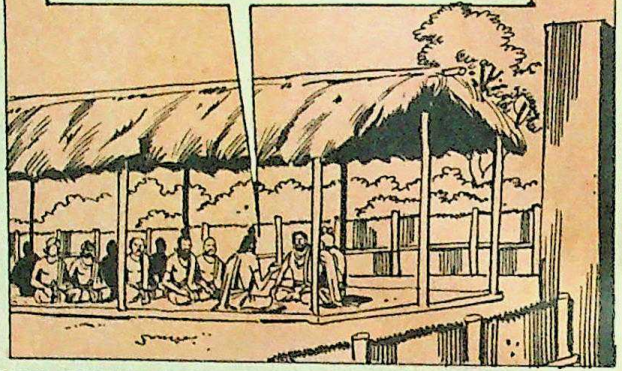
I LOVE ARJUNA EVEN
MORE THAN I LOVE MY
SON, ASHWATTHAMA. ALAS! I
WILL HAVE TO FIGHT HIM IN
ACCORDANCE WITH
MY DHARMA.



I AGAIN ENTREAT
YOU, O DURYODHANA,
THERE IS NO NEED FOR
WAR. MAKE PEACE WITH
THOSE HEROES FOR THE
PROSPERITY AND WELL-
BEING OF THE WHOLE
KURU RACE.



BUT THE ENTREATIES OF BHEESHMA
AND DRONA FELL UPON DEAF EARS.
DURYODHANA GLOWERED AT THEM
AND REFUSED TO SAY A WORD IN
REPLY.



"DHRTIRASHTRA SAID TO SANJAYA —

O SANJAYA, I HEAR THAT
KRISHNA TOOK KARNA WITH HIM
IN HIS CHARIOT AND WENT OUT OF
THE CITY. TELL ME, O SANJAYA,
WHAT KRISHNA SPOKE TO KARNA
AND WHAT THE LATTER
SAID IN REPLY.

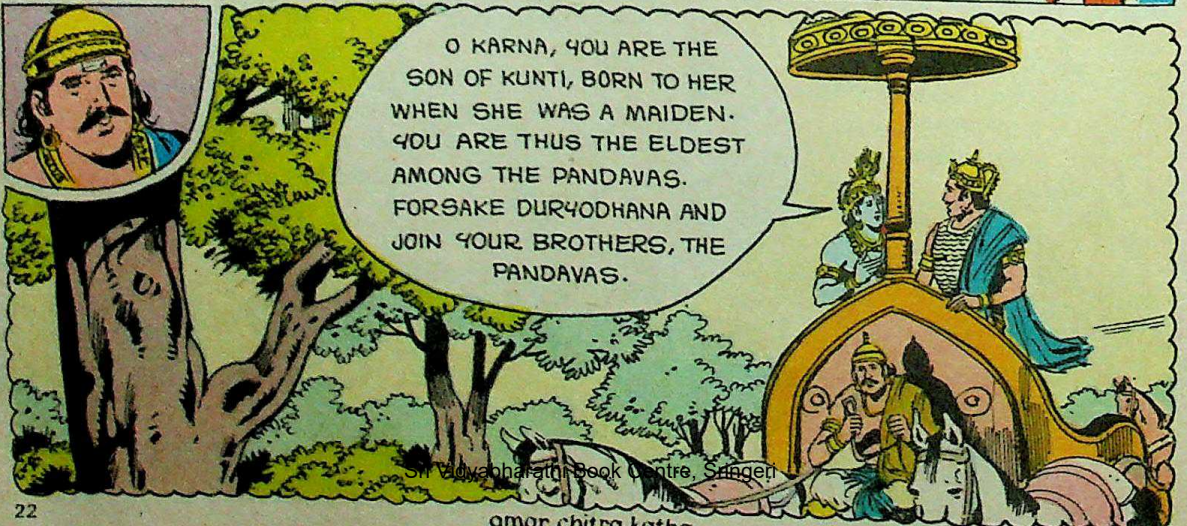


"SANJAYA SAID —

THEN LISTEN,
O KING, WHILE I
RECOUNT THE
DIALOGUE BETWEEN
KRISHNA AND
KARNA.



O KARNA, YOU ARE THE
SON OF KUNTI, BORN TO HER
WHEN SHE WAS A MAIDEN.
YOU ARE THUS THE ELDEST
AMONG THE PANDAVAS.
FORSAKE DURYODHANA AND
JOIN YOUR BROTHERS, THE
PANDAVAS.

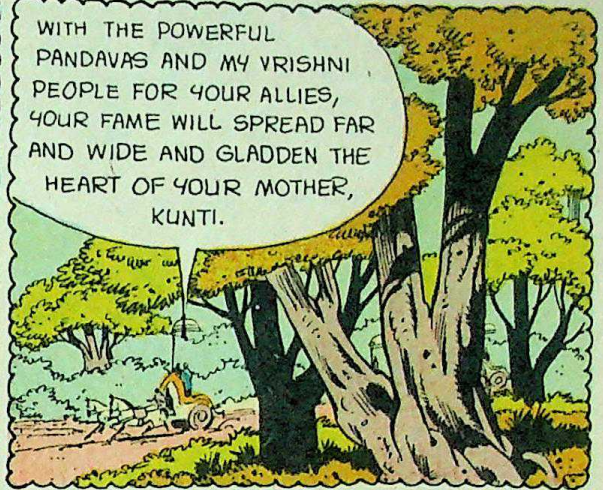


"KRISHNA CONTINUED —

PROCEEDING THIS
VERY DAY WITH ME,
LET US GO AND
BREAK THE GOOD NEWS
TO THE PANDAVAS.
THEY WILL WILLINGLY
ACCEPT YOU AS THEIR
KING AND
RULER.

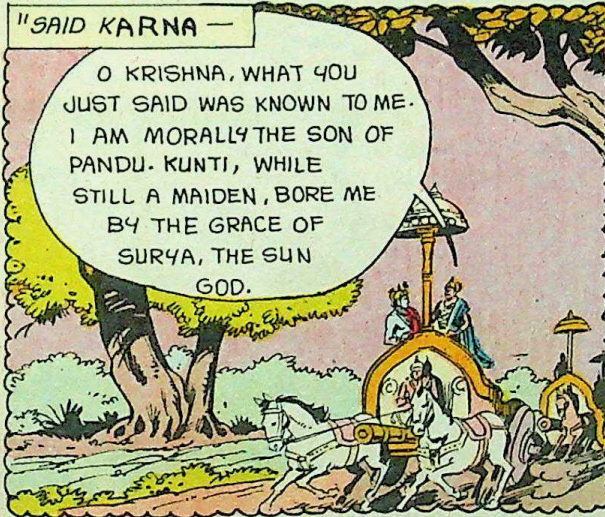


WITH THE POWERFUL
PANDAVAS AND MY VRISHNI
PEOPLE FOR YOUR ALLIES,
YOUR FAME WILL SPREAD FAR
AND WIDE AND GLADDEN THE
HEART OF YOUR MOTHER,
KUNTI.

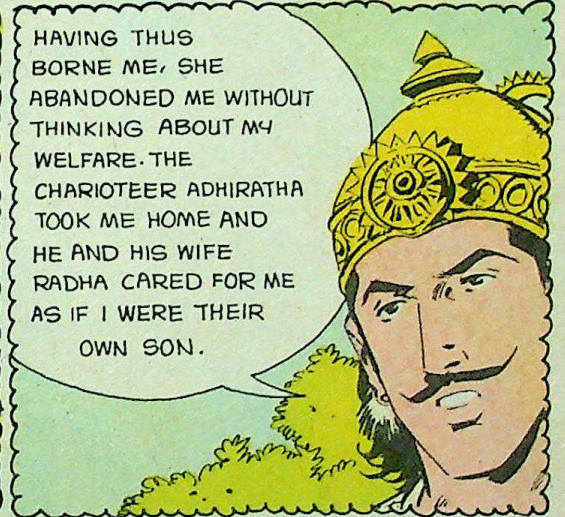


"SAID KARNA —

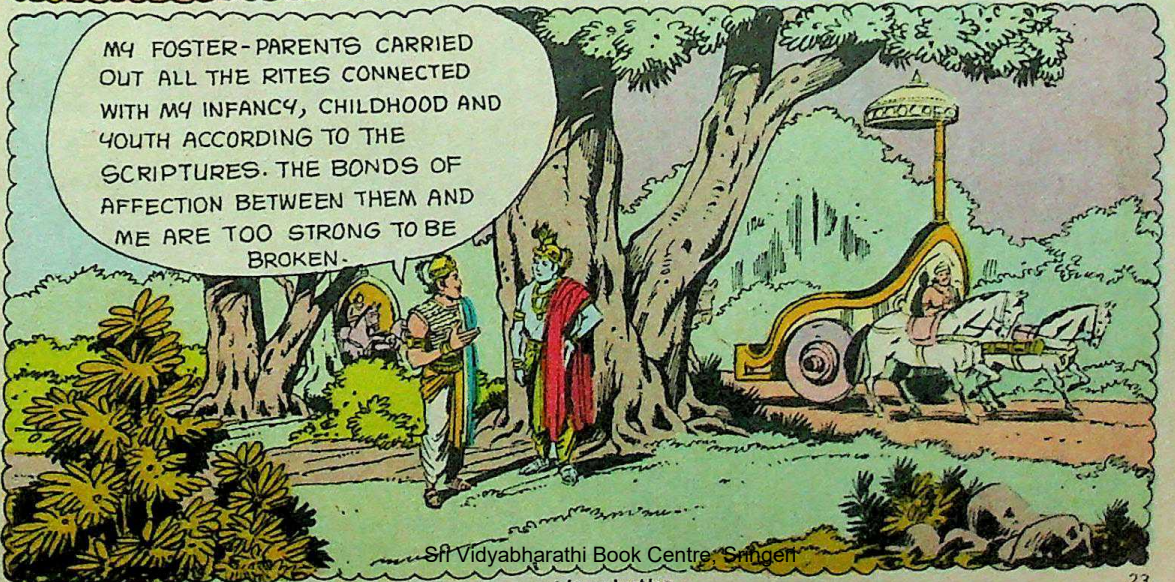
O KRISHNA, WHAT YOU
JUST SAID WAS KNOWN TO ME.
I AM MORALLY THE SON OF
PANDU. KUNTI, WHILE
STILL A MAIDEN, BORE ME
BY THE GRACE OF
SURYA, THE SUN
GOD.

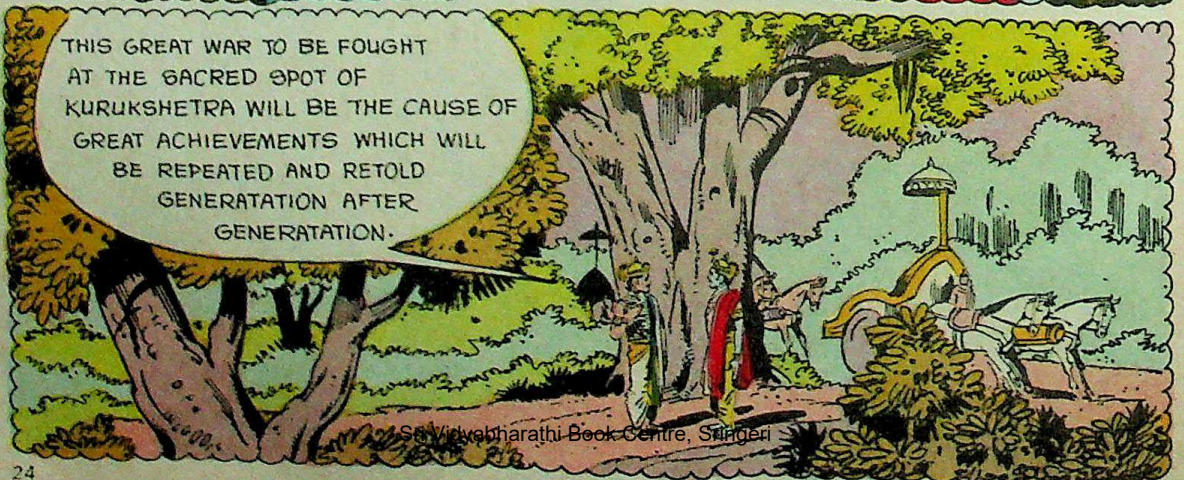
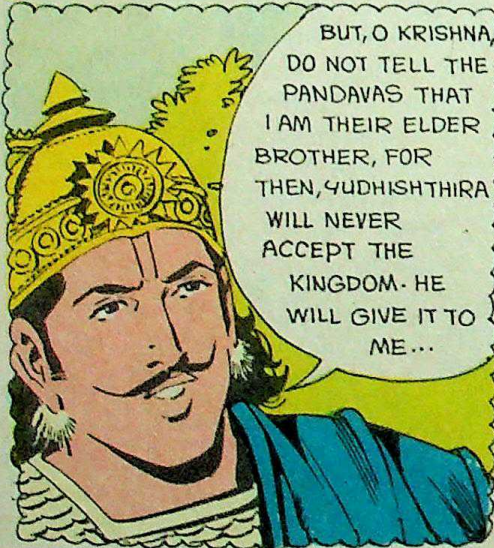
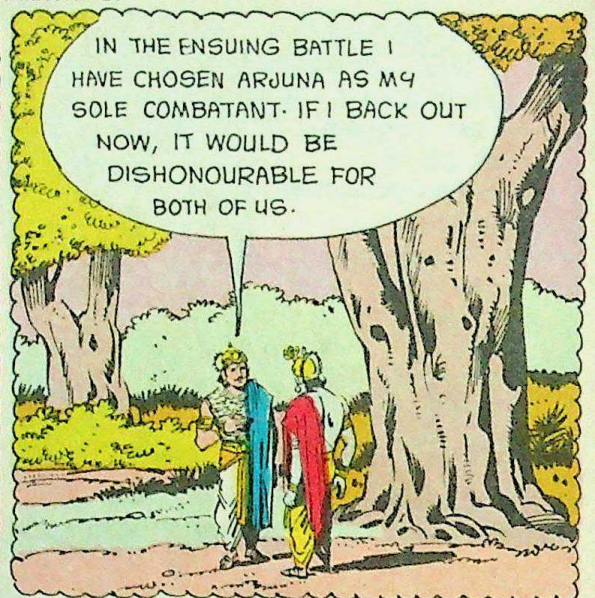


HAVING THUS
BORNE ME, SHE
ABANDONED ME WITHOUT
THINKING ABOUT MY
WELFARE. THE
CHARIOTEER ADHIRATHA
TOOK ME HOME AND
HE AND HIS WIFE
RADHA CARED FOR ME
AS IF I WERE THEIR
OWN SON.



MY FOSTER-PARENTS CARRIED
OUT ALL THE RITES CONNECTED
WITH MY INFANCY, CHILDHOOD AND
YOUTH ACCORDING TO THE
SCRIPTURES. THE BONDS OF
AFFECTION BETWEEN THEM AND
ME ARE TOO STRONG TO BE
BROKEN.

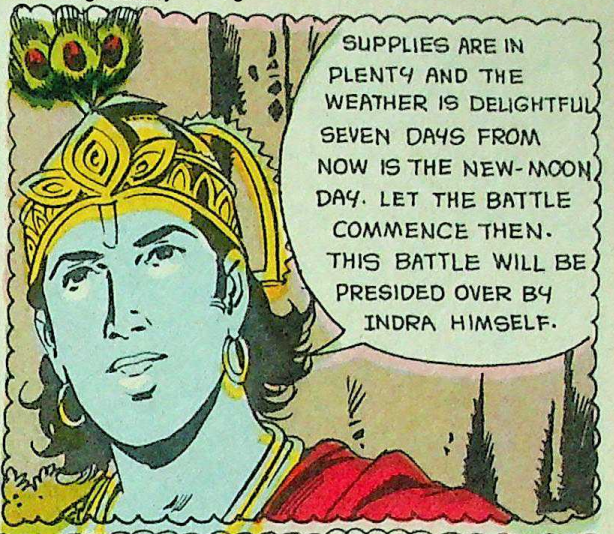
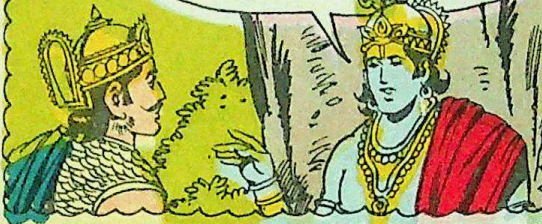






"KRISHNA SAID—

O KARNA, YOU DO NOT WISH TO RULE THE EARTH WITH THE PANDAVAS AND MYSELF AS YOUR ALLIES. GO THEN BACK TO THE KAURAVAS AND TELL THEM THAT THE PRESENT MONTH IS AUSPICIOUS FOR BATTLE.



SUPPLIES ARE IN PLENTY AND THE WEATHER IS DELIGHTFUL SEVEN DAYS FROM NOW IS THE NEW-MOON DAY. LET THE BATTLE COMMENCE THEN. THIS BATTLE WILL BE PRESIDED OVER BY INDRA HIMSELF.



"KARNA SAID—

O KRISHNA, YOU KNOW THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. YOU KNOW THAT ALL KAURAVAS AND MYSELF ARE DESTINED TO BE DESTROYED.



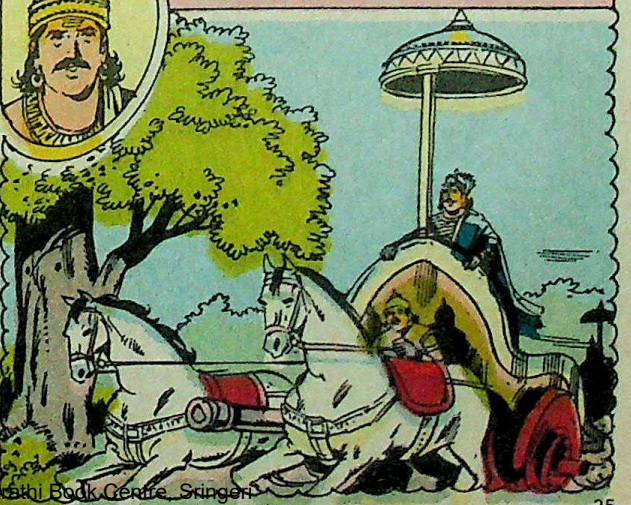
IF WE COME OUT OF THIS GREAT BATTLE ALIVE, THEN WE SHALL MEET AGAIN HERE ON EARTH. OTHERWISE, CERTAINLY, WE SHALL MEET IN HEAVEN.



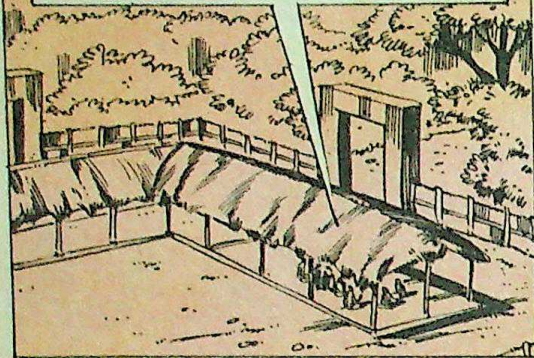
"KARNA THEN EMBRACED KRISHNA FONDLY...



"...AND LEFT FOR HASTINA PURA.



MEANWHILE, BACK IN HASTINAPURA, VIDURA INFORMED KUNTI OF THE FAILURE OF KRISHNA'S MISSION AS A RESULT OF DURYODHANA'S OBSTINACY.



"KUNTI BEMOANED—

OF WHAT USE ARE WEALTH AND POWER GAINED THROUGH LARGE-SCALE DESTRUCTION? THE FACT THAT BHEESHMA, DRONA AND KARNA WILL JOIN THE RANKS OF THE KAURAVAS FILLS ME WITH GREATER FEAR.



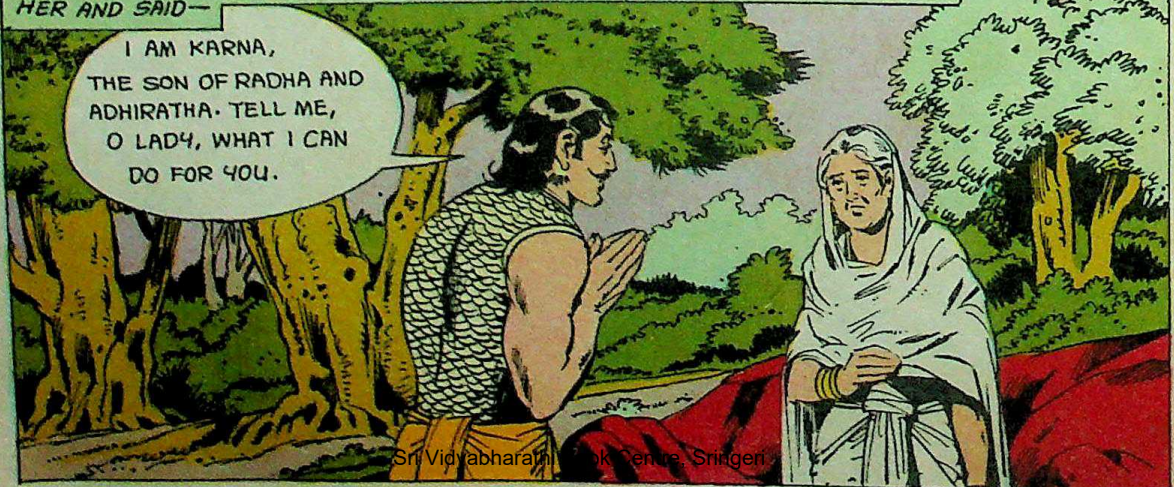
BHEESHMA AND DRONA WILL NOT WILLINGLY SLAY THE PANDAVAS WHO ARE VERY DEAR TO THEM. BUT KARNA? HE IS MIGHTY AND WILL SURELY TRY TO KILL MY SONS. I WILL GO AND APPEAL TO HIM AS A MOTHER.

"SO KUNTI ARRIVED ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGA WHERE KARNA WAS WORSHIPPING SURYA, THE SUN GOD.



"HAVING FINISHED HIS PRAYERS, KARNA TURNED AND SAW KUNTI. HE BOWED TO HER AND SAID—

I AM KARNA, THE SON OF RADHA AND ADHIRATHA. TELL ME, O LADY, WHAT I CAN DO FOR YOU.



Shri Vidya bhairavi Book Centre, Sringeri

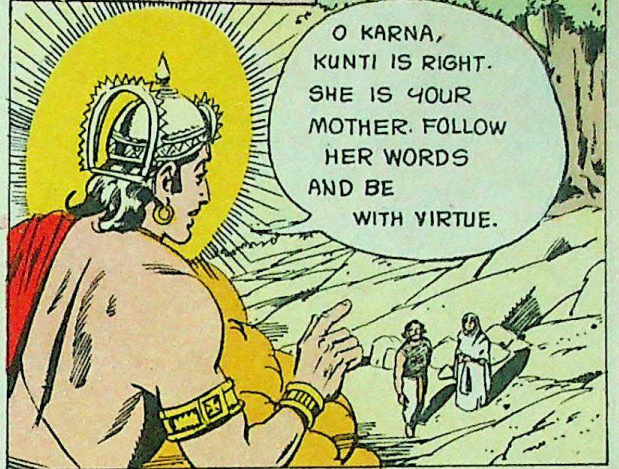
"KUNTI SAID —

YOU ARE MY SON. I BORE YOU WHEN I WAS YET A MAIDEN BY THE GRACE OF THE DIVINE AND BLAZING SURYA.



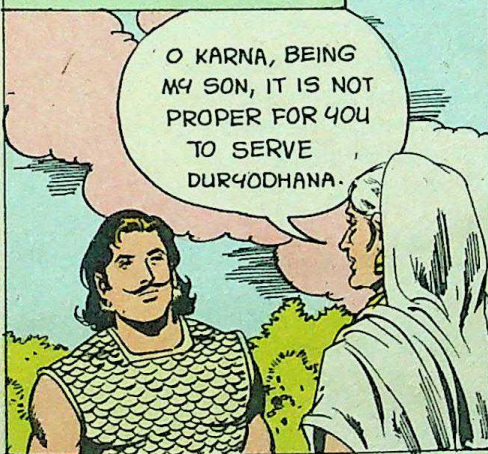
"JUST THEN, SURYA'S VOICE RANG OUT FROM THE HEAVENS.

O KARNA, KUNTI IS RIGHT. SHE IS YOUR MOTHER. FOLLOW HER WORDS AND BE WITH VIRTUE.

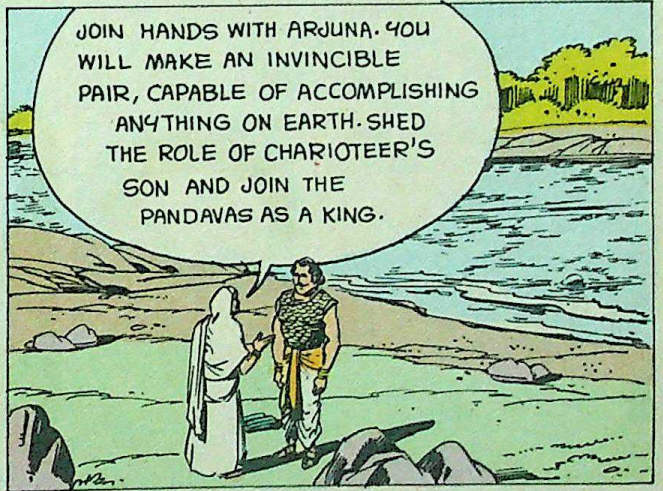


"KUNTI CONTINUED —

O KARNA, BEING MY SON, IT IS NOT PROPER FOR YOU TO SERVE DURYODHANA.

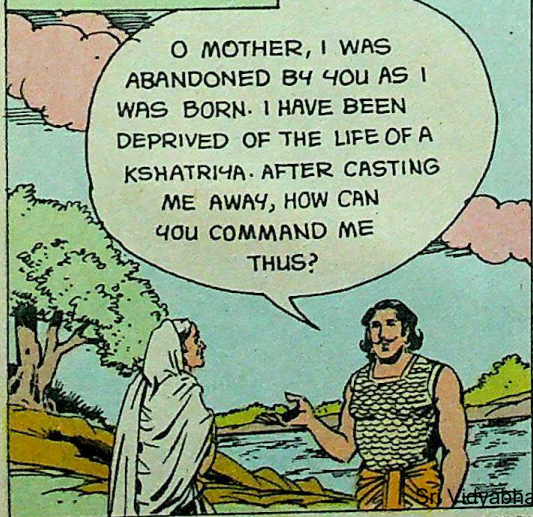


JOIN HANDS WITH ARJUNA. YOU WILL MAKE AN INVINCIBLE PAIR, CAPABLE OF ACCOMPLISHING ANYTHING ON EARTH. SHED THE ROLE OF CHARIOTEER'S SON AND JOIN THE PANDAVAS AS A KING.

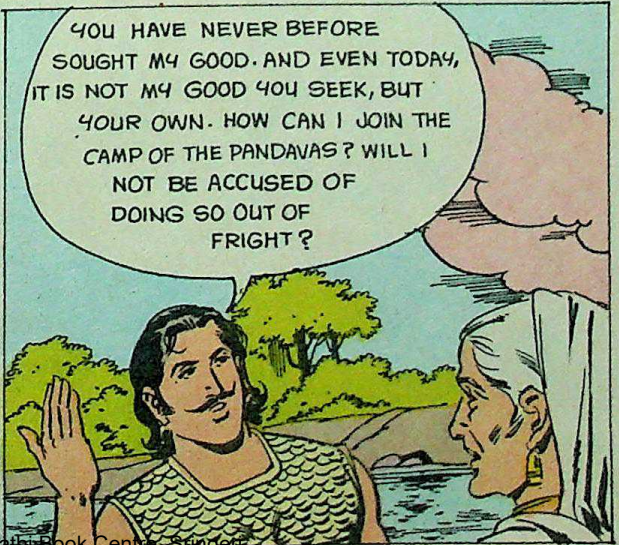


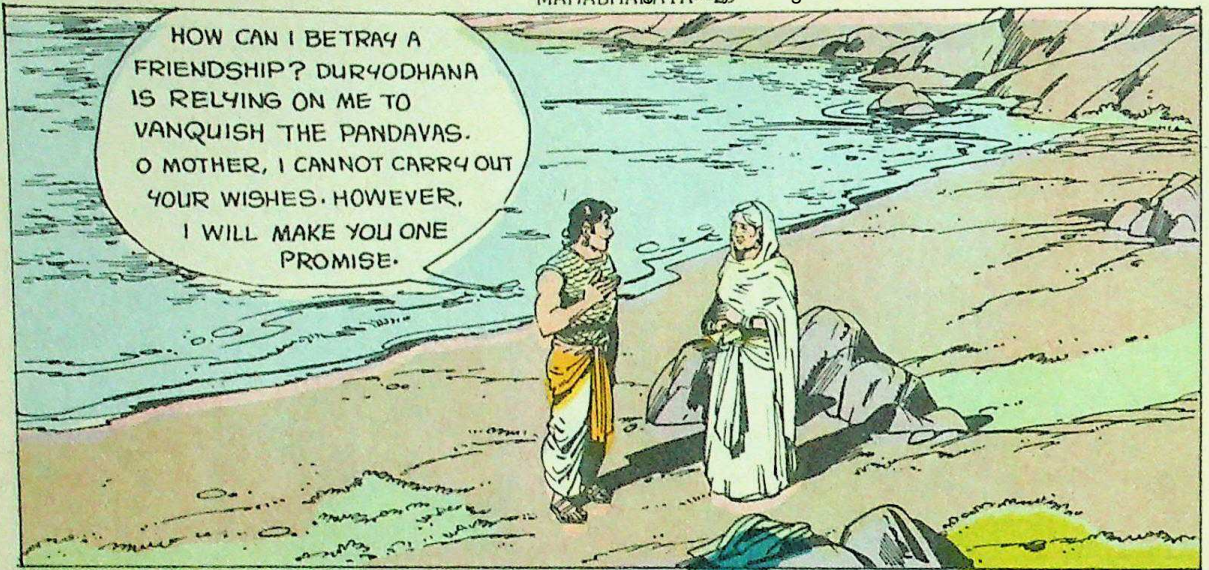
"KARNA SAID —

O MOTHER, I WAS ABANDONED BY YOU AS I WAS BORN. I HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF THE LIFE OF A KSHATRIYA. AFTER CASTING ME AWAY, HOW CAN YOU COMMAND ME THUS?

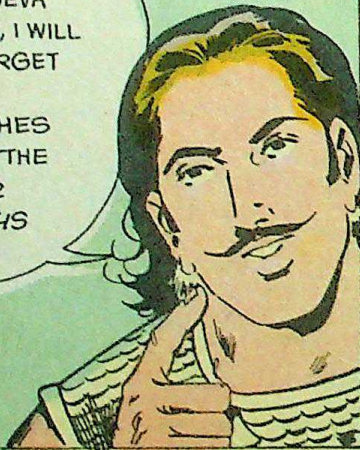


YOU HAVE NEVER BEFORE SOUGHT MY GOOD. AND EVEN TODAY, IT IS NOT MY GOOD YOU SEEK, BUT YOUR OWN. HOW CAN I JOIN THE CAMP OF THE PANDAVAS? WILL I NOT BE ACCUSED OF DOING SO OUT OF FRIGHT?



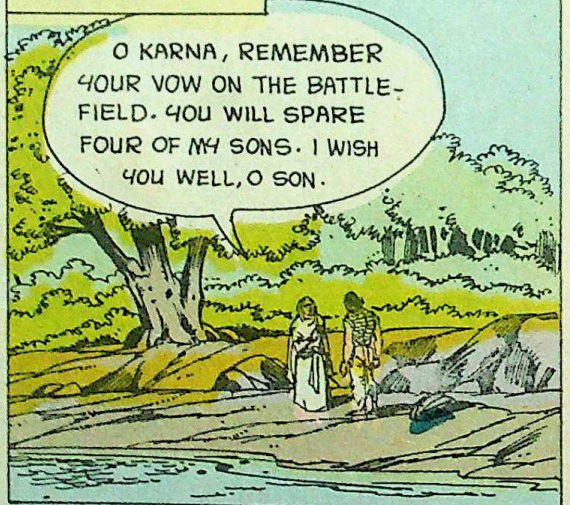


THOUGH I CAN EASILY SLAY YUDHISHTHIRA, BHEEMA, NAKULA AND SAHADEVA IN SINGLE COMBAT, I WILL NOT DO SO. MY TARGET IS ARJUNA ALONE. EITHER HE PERISHES OR I WILL. THUS THE NUMBER OF YOUR SONS WILL ALWAYS REMAIN FIVE.

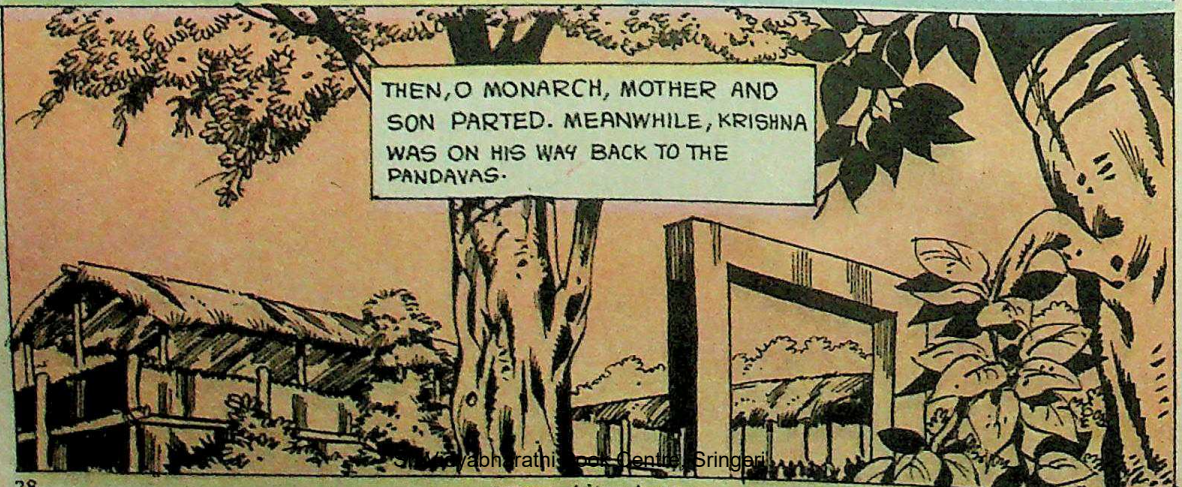


"KUNTI SAID —

O KARNA, REMEMBER YOUR VOW ON THE BATTLE-FIELD. YOU WILL SPARE FOUR OF MY SONS. I WISH YOU WELL, O SON.

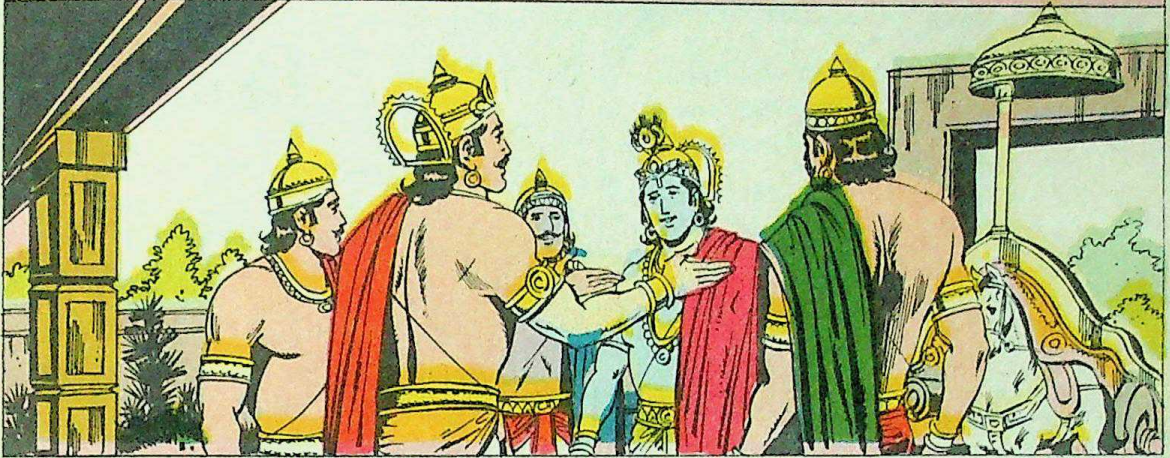


THEN, O MONARCH, MOTHER AND SON PARTED. MEANWHILE, KRISHNA WAS ON HIS WAY BACK TO THE PANDAVAS.

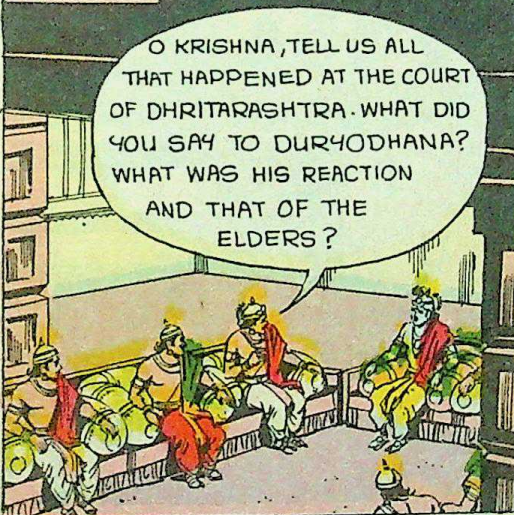


KRISHNA'S PEACE MISSION

"ARRIVING AT UPAPLAYA, KRISHNA WAS GIVEN AN AFFECTIONATE WELCOME BY THE PANDAVAS.

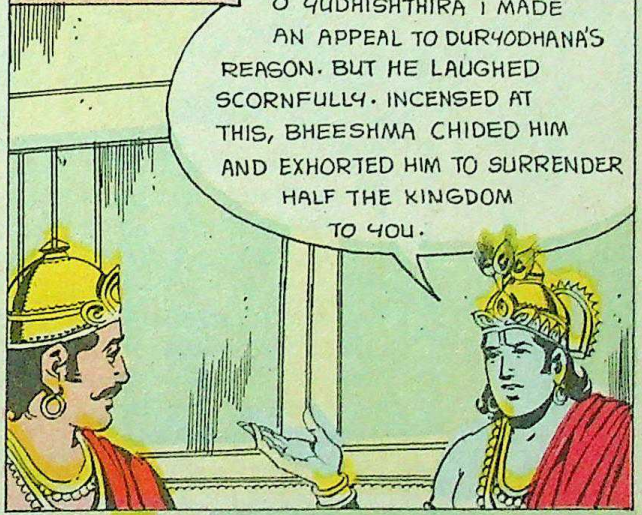


"LATER —



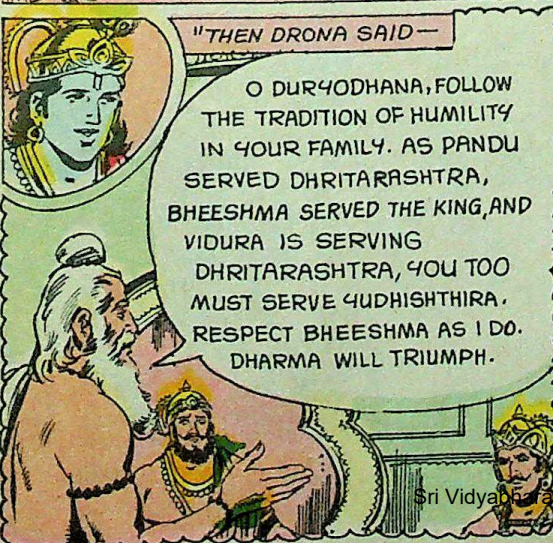
O KRISHNA, TELL US ALL THAT HAPPENED AT THE COURT OF DHRTARASHTRA. WHAT DID YOU SAY TO DURYODHANA? WHAT WAS HIS REACTION AND THAT OF THE ELDERS?

"KRISHNA SAID —



O YUDHISHTHIRA I MADE AN APPEAL TO DURYODHANA'S REASON. BUT HE LAUGHED SCORNFULLY. INCENSED AT THIS, BHEESHMA CHIDED HIM AND EXHORTED HIM TO SURRENDER HALF THE KINGDOM TO YOU.

"THEN DRONA SAID —



O DURYODHANA, FOLLOW THE TRADITION OF HUMILITY IN YOUR FAMILY. AS PANDU SERVED DHRTARASHTRA, BHEESHMA SERVED THE KING, AND VIDURA IS SERVING DHRTARASHTRA, YOU TOO MUST SERVE YUDHISHTHIRA. RESPECT BHEESHMA AS I DO. DHARMA WILL TRIUMPH.

"BUT DURYODHANA WOULD NOT YIELD. THE WORDS OF DHRTARASHTRA AND GANDHARI ALSO PROVED IN VAIN.

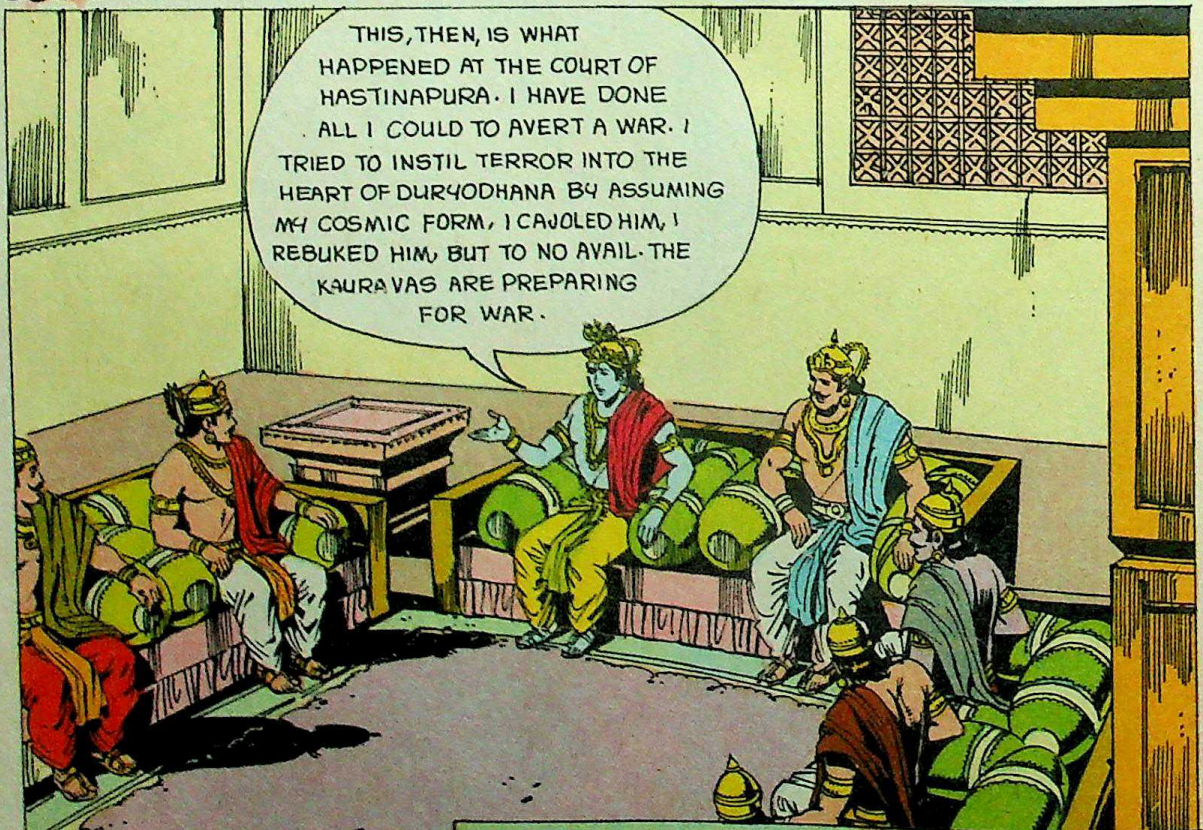
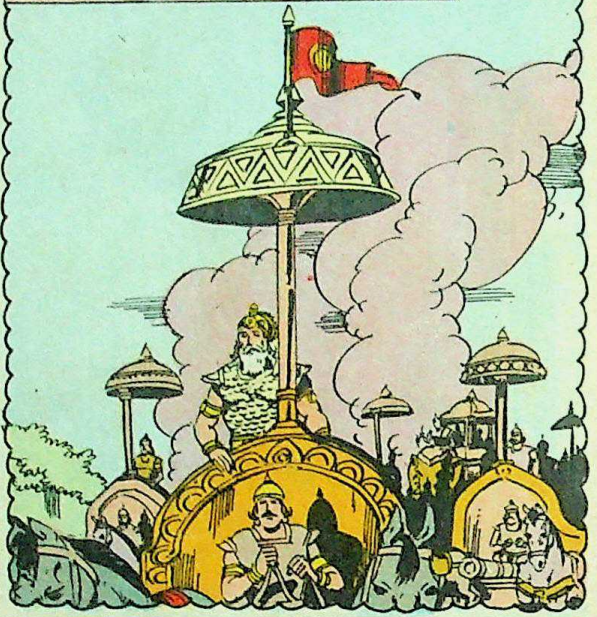




"DURYODHANA SAID TO HIS SUPPORTERS—

GET READY
FOR WAR. MARCH
THIS VERY DAY TO
KURUKSHETRA.

" THEN THE TROOPS MARCHED OUT
WITH BHEESHMA AT THEIR HEAD.



THIS, THEN, IS WHAT
HAPPENED AT THE COURT OF
HASTINAPURA. I HAVE DONE
ALL I COULD TO AVERT A WAR. I
TRIED TO INSTIL TERROR INTO THE
HEART OF DURYODHANA BY ASSUMING
MY COSMIC FORM, I CAVOLED HIM, I
REBUKED HIM, BUT TO NO AVAIL. THE
KAURAVAS ARE PREPARING
FOR WAR.

AND THUS ENDS THE TWENTY- NINTH SESSION OF OUR
RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF
VASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA, MAHABHARATA.



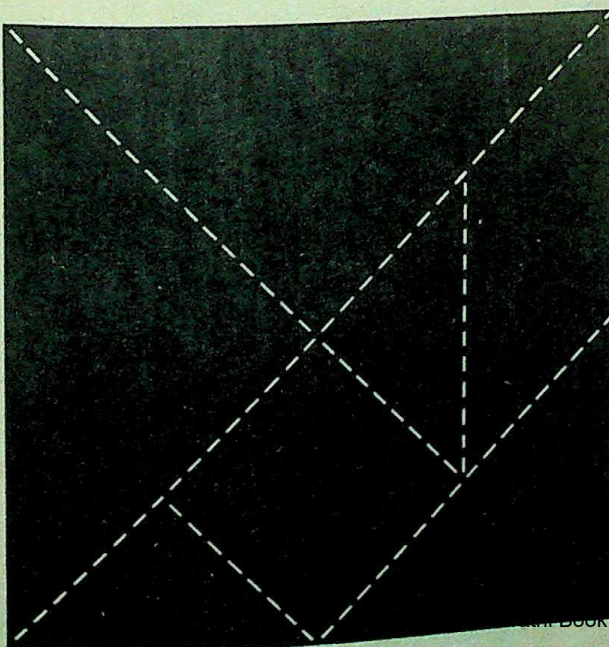
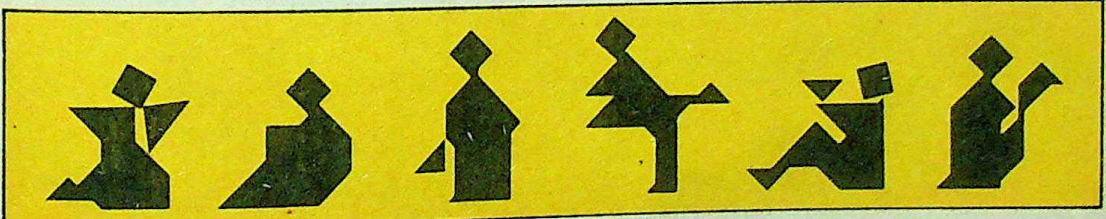
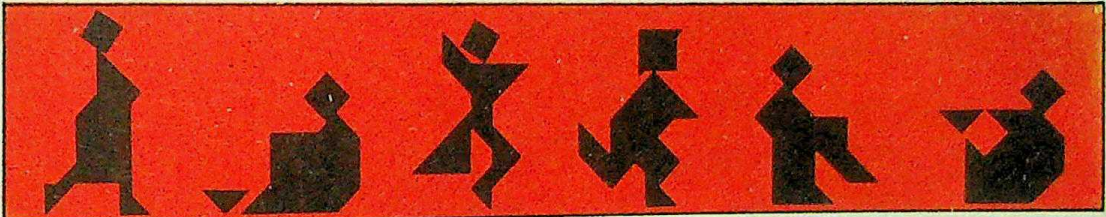
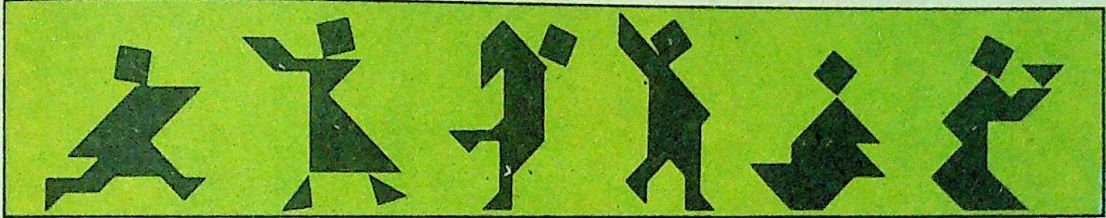
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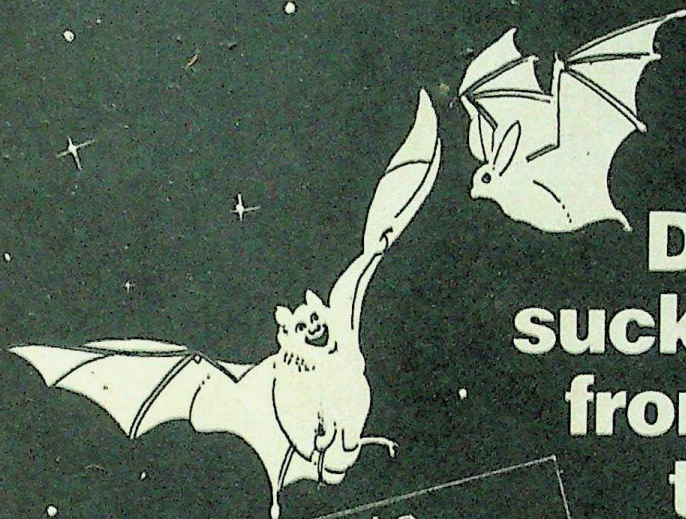
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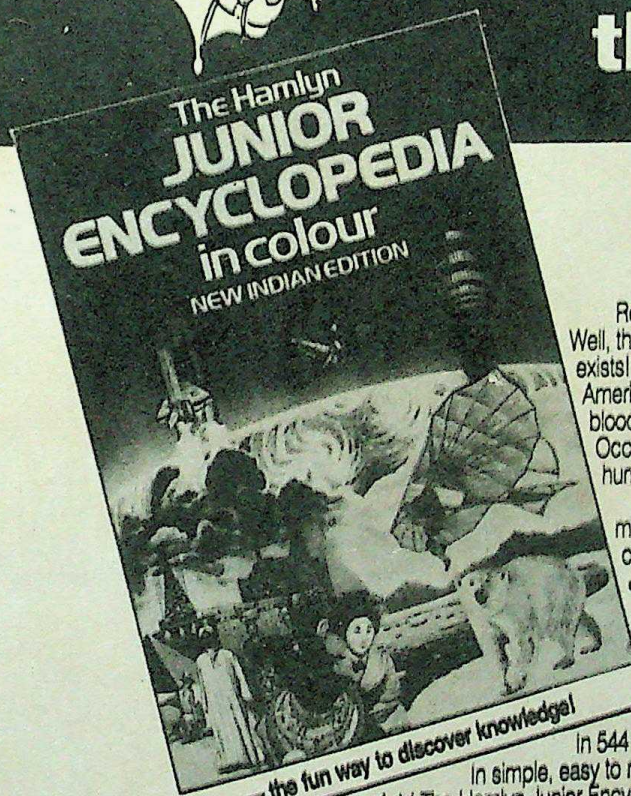
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